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INVOLUNTARY DISENGAGEMENT FROM A HIGH SCHOOL SPORT'S ENVIRONMENT

University — Université

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

M.A.

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
1982	DR. M. ANN HALL

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Involuntary Disengagement From a High School Sport's Environment

by

(C) Sarah I. Gilroy

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF Master of Arts

Department of Physical Education

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

Fall 1982

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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Supervisor

.....

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Date.....JUNE 29, 1982.....

DEDICATION

To my parents, Ian and Isobel Gilroy.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the process by which athletes become involuntarily disengaged from high school sport.

The data for this qualitative study were collected largely through interviews with high school basketball coaches (n=6) who selected their teams in November 1981, and with the female athletes (n=13) whom they 'cut'. The analysis of the data was greatly aided by the use of 'grounded theory'.

Using the selection process as one example of a status passage (non team-member to team-member) it was found that the reversal of this passage (which resulted in the player being cut) exhibited characteristics of both 'cooling-out' and 'degradation' processes. In general, the involuntary disengagement processes studied were found to be more 'degrading' than 'cooling-out' in their nature. A state of 'closed awareness' also pervaded the selection processes.

Recommendations based upon these findings suggested that an 'open awareness' context should be maintained throughout the selection process to prevent any lack of communication between the coach and the player developing into a lack of understanding. It was also suggested that greater assistance be given to those athletes who, although disengaged from the team, still wanted to maintain some

involvement in basketball.

It was strongly recommended that future research in the area concentrate upon higher levels of amateur competition, as it was felt that the degree of centrality of the passage to the athlete would necessarily affect their understanding and interpretation of involuntary disengagement. Research into other forms of involuntary disengagement in sport was also advocated. The study concludes with an Addendum, which has been written in the form of a personal account of the research process. It is hoped that the problems discussed and the descriptions of *how* the study was done may prove useful to fellow researchers in qualitative sociology.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisory committee, of Dr. M. Ann Hall, Dr. D. Al MacKay and Dr. Harvey A. Scott, for their valued advice and support throughout this study. I would like to make special mention of Dr. M. Ann Hall, my academic guide and mentor, whose guidance and friendship over the past two years I have greatly appreciated.

I would also like to acknowledge those who first stirred my 'sociological imagination': the Social Aspects Department at Dunfermline College of Physical Education, Edinburgh, Scotland and in particular Joyce Sherlock and Dave Whitson.

Although the names of those involved in the study have been withheld, I would like to thank not only the Edmonton Catholic School Board and the Edmonton Public School Board for their consent to do the study, but also the school principals, the physical educators, the coaches and the athletes who gave so freely of their time and knowledge.

A special mention must also go to my fellow graduate students at the University of Alberta from 1980-1982, who contributed so much to my intellectual and personal growth.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement provided by my family during my Canadian 'adventure', of which this thesis was just a small part.

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I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Canada, like most other liberal democratic societies exhibits the remnants of Weber's 'protestant work ethic'. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber suggests that the Calvinistic drive for each person to prove their eligiblity for heaven has given rise to the characteristics that underlie an industrialized and capitalistic economy. Although today, the strong Calvinistic beliefs which formed the 'protestant ethic' have dissipated, the drive to be 'the best' still exists.

In sport and education this legacy manifests itself in an increasing emphasis upon success and winning. In nearly all aspects of life, competitions have been established, which pit individuals against one another, in an attempt to identify who is the best. Although, education is not inherently competitive, it does have well established forms of competition (for example, bursaries and scholarships). In the past few decades, some educational awards have been extended to include excellence in physical education and sport. In the United States, especially, the development of sport scholarships to universities has raised questions about whether the athletes are there to do a degree, or solely to compete in a highly professionalized sport.

Amateur sport, outside of the collegiate environment, seems to be rapidly approaching the highly rationalized

model of professional sports. [1]In some instances (world class athletic competition) the strict economic definition of 'who is a professional?' seems to include many amateurs. The ramifications of this are serious, for it results in an increasing tendency for sport in Canadian society to follow the professional model.

During both primary and secondary socialization ,[2] children are exposed to this quasi-professional image and they come to accept it as being normative. This image or model of sport is regarded as being normative because the characteristics which underlie it (striving to be the best and win at all costs) also underlie the other institutions in society.

Even during primary socialization the child is exposed to this competitive ethic; it may be experienced directly through interaction with others or indirectly, for example

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[1] The professional model can be identified as possessing the following characteristics: an increasing lack of control by the athlete over his or her own sports world; a concomitant increase in the control extended by management; a 'win at all costs' mentality and a highly bureaucratic administration structure.

[2] Socialization is a complex social process designed to produce as an end product an individual who is prepared (i.e. socialized) for the requirements of participation in society in general, and for the performance of a variety of social roles in specific sub-groups within that society (McPherson in Lueschen and Sage, 1981:246).

Primary socialization is the first stage in the process (above), which refers to that period in the child's life when the immediate family have the most significant impact upon what the child learns. *Secondary* socialization refers to that period in the child's life when agencies other than the family (i.e. school, peers) begin to influence and to some extent control what the child learns.

through television. During secondary socialization, whilst the child attends school, competition becomes a major part of its life. The competition may take various forms: firstly, the child could compete with him or herself; secondly, the child could compete with peers; and thirdly, the child may compete against representatives from other schools. There is nothing inherently harmful in any of these types of competition, any 'damage' which may accrue as a result of competition is probably a function of either those competing (for example, they may take the sport too seriously and develop a 'win at all costs' attitude) or those organizing the competition (who may force a professional model of sport onto amateur sport), or both.

Within education, there has been relatively little research done concerning the effects of competition as it occurs in physical education. The myth that all types of competition are beneficial still exists in many educational institutions. The lack of research in the broader area of education is, perhaps understandable, for the results of any competition are usually private, and only in extreme cases will a child be moved from one class to another which better suits his or her ability. In physical education, however, the results of competition are much more public, the child may be the last one to cross the finish line, or the person who is always caught first during a game of tag: anybody observing the situation would be able to identify the 'loser'. Being identified as a 'loser' can result in the

individual becoming stigmatized as a 'failure'. As Goffman (1963:1-5) suggests, when an individual is stigmatized, they are discredited because they have an undesired differentness, with which others may not want to associate.[3]

With the increasing popularity of 'humanistic' physical education, there have been attempts to alter the learning environment in which the child finds him/herself. Perhaps the best exemplar of this 'new' form of education is Mosston, who in his book *Teaching: From Command to Discovery*, shows ways in which each child can be given increasing control over their own learning environment. This naturally makes the whole learning process less threatening for the child because they negotiate with the teacher the form that the skill progressions should take.

The role physical education plays in high school education, is only partly depicted by studying what happens within the allotted class time. The role is extended in most schools to include interschool competitions. Although, on occasion these teams may not be coached by one of the physical education staff.

The Purpose of the Study

If it is true to say that physical education has escaped the notice of many researchers, then the same thing

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[3] It is possible, however, for an individual to fail to live up to what is demanded of them and yet be relatively unaffected by the failure. Goffman suggests that such an individual is insulated by their alienation, and protected by identity beliefs of their own (1963:6).

can be said of this one aspect of physical education. This study hopes to come closer towards gaining more insight into one of the processes involved in inter-school athletic competition, the selection process. To do this a qualitative approach will be used in order to gain insights into the following processes:

1. How the coaches structure the selection process:
2. What type(s) of involuntary disengagement procedure is(are) used
3. How the athletes who failed to be selected for the team interpret the process.
4. How the disengaged athletes manage the status change.

The Need for the Study

As suggested before, not only has there been a paucity of research looking at the effects of competition in physical education, but also qualitative methodologies have been given relatively scant attention. This study therefore, attempts to break away from the logico-deductive paradigm [4] so prevalent in the natural sciences. This break should not be interpreted as a blanket rejection of the natural science paradigm and all it has to offer, but rather it is a realization that not all aspects of social life can be reduced to controllable variables.

It is also felt by the author that the selection process, as an example of involuntary disengagement may be

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[4] This paradigm is characterized by theories generated by logical deduction from a priori assumptions (Glaser and Strauss, 1979:3).

problematic for both the athletes and coaches involved. The situation may be seen as problematic if, instead of promoting an active interest in physical activity, as is the aim of physical education, the process of having been involuntarily disengaged has the opposite effect. This hypothesis is founded only upon personal experience and through informal interaction with coaches and athletes from many sports and from many levels ranging from Olympic competition to high school level.

Failure in sport[5] has been investigated at various levels. Ball, in his article "Failure in Sport"(1976), investigates the relationships between: 1. the occurrence of failure in sport and reactions to it; and 2. the social organization of sport. Like several others,[6] however, Ball's analysis considers only professional sport (in particular baseball and football) and with no reference to amateur, let alone high school sport. This study attempts to use two concepts suggested by Ball (Goffman's 'cooling-out' and Garfinkel's 'degradation')[7] and investigates the extent to which these and other related concepts[8] can explicate the selection process and in particular, the processes of involuntary disengagement as experienced by those intimately involved with selected girl's high school basketball teams.

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[5] Ball defines 'failure' as being genuine only when it lacks volition(1976:726).
[6] Harris and Eitzen (1978) draw most of their examples of failure in sport from professional sport.
[7] A detailed explanation of these concepts can be found in Chapter III.
[8] These concepts are also outlined in Chapter III.

The Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study has been greatly influenced by Glaser and Strauss and their work on 'grounded theory' (1979, 10th.Ed.). Although this approach to theory generation shall be expanded upon in a later section[9], suffice it to say that 'grounded theory' concerns the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research(1979:2). Although this means that there is little, if any, a priori theorizing, it does not negate the employment of such sociological concepts as role performance, identity management and status passage.

Sociologically, this study stems from Max Weber's concept of social action. Concepts which are rooted in the Weberian tradition, are concerned with the dialectical relationship between an individual and society. The individual, therefore, is seen as being able to take an active role in the construction and modification of his or her social reality.

This study, is exploratory in nature, as it attempts to gain insights into how both coaches and athletes construct and reconstruct their social realities during the process of involuntary disengagement from a social organization (girl's basketball team).

Format of Thesis

The remainder of the thesis shall be presented in the following manner. Chapter II reviews some of the literature

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[9] See Chapter IV, pp. 64-69.

relating to sociology, sport and physical education, and considers the type of research that is being done within these areas. Chapter III presents various theoretical perspectives, from psychology and sociology, which may prove informative when looking at failure and involuntary disengagement. Chapter IV, which although largely concerned with a description of the methods and procedures begins with a discussion on the contribution of 'interpretive' sociology, on which the methodology is grounded. In Chapter V., the information gathered and the theoretical perspectives considered are discussed in relation to their ability to explicate the process of involuntary disengagement which may be operating at the high school level. Chapter VI presents a summary of the research results and makes recommendations for future research, based upon them. Although not central to the thesis, the author decided to include an addendum, which gives an account of the research process, for as Mills(1961) suggests, the process, can in many cases, be more informative than the product.

II. SOCIOLOGY, SPORT AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Introduction

Having outlined the intent of this study, this section attempts to present some background information concerning the academic and professional disciplines from which the study comes. The most notable disciplines being sociology (and two of its subdisciplines: sociology of education and sociology of sport) and physical education. This section does not presume to review all the subject matter of each discipline, but rather it draws upon only those aspects which the author deemed applicable within the limits of this study.

Sociology

Sociology has changed quite noticeably from the discipline first envisaged by Auguste Comte in the mid-eighteen hundreds. [10] Instead of an eclectic approach to knowledge, much favoured in the nineteenth century, modern sociology is often studied in isolation from not only the natural sciences, but also from other social sciences. This specialization does not end at the discipline boundaries, for there now exists, within sociology, many distinct subdisciplines. The general approach of the author is one of integration, and it is hoped that others will follow in this attempt to break down the false discipline and

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[10] Comte's work represented the first scientific study of society: a study which he claimed was ostensibly based on pure objective fact (Abraham, 1977:86).

sub-discipline barriers which presently exist. This section although appearing initially to perpetuate the false barriers, attempts to describe briefly each and highlight the bridges which exist between them.

Sociology of Education

The sociology of education can be traced as far back as can mainstream sociology, but it is only in the past few decades that more critical approaches have been adopted towards the sociological study of education. Of concern to this study, however, is what Karabel and Halsey (1977) call the 'new' sociology of education. This 'new' sociology of education arose partly as a reaction to the perceived inadequacies of macrosociology [11] in explaining the problems of differential academic achievement (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:45). The 'macro' approach is best typified by proponents of Talcott Parson's structural functionalism. The 'new' or 'micro' sociology of education has also been christened the 'interpretative' paradigm (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:46) The 'interpretative' paradigm (also known as the 'interpretive' paradigm) includes phenomenology and ethnomethodology, with interaction theory being regarded as 'next of kin' (Murphy, 1979:141). This genre of sociology stresses the idea that social relations are humanly

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[11] Put simply, macrosociology refers to a genre of sociology which looks at society in terms of the interrelationships between structures. Its antithesis, microsociology, sees individuals as being the prime acting units.

constructed. The 'construction' process is largely one of negotiation by the interacting individuals. These negotiations result in what Karabel and Halsey (after W. I. Thomas) call 'definitions of the situation' (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:58).

A structural-functional view of education, [12] therefore, is seen to be in complete contrast to education guided by the 'interpretative' paradigm. This paradigm maintains that teacher's and children do not come together in a historical vaccuum (as implied by structural functionalism), but rather the accumulation of precedent conditions determines the outcome of the negotiation over meanings (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:58) . The differences that exist between these theoretical camps becomes even more apparent when one considers the methodology usually employed by each. Douglas (in a similar vein to Mills' (1959) attack on 'abstracted empiricism') condems abstractionism:

> Any scientific understanding of human action, at whatever level of ordering or generality, must begin with and be built upon an understanding of the everyday life of the members performing those actions. (To fail to see this and to act in accord with it is to commit what we might call the fallacy of abstractionism, that is, the fallacy of believing that you can know in a more abstract form what you do not know in a more particular form)(in Meighan, 1981:224).

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[12] This approach, according to Meighan, tends to stress the activity of schools in training and selecting children so that they fit into some necessary slot in a relatively harmonious society (Meighan, 1981:27).

Often in discussions of this sort, when an approach has been developed, primarily as a reaction to another, there is a tendency to take the discussion of the merits and demerits of each approach to extremes. When criticisms are made, the most extreme cases are used in an effort to make the approach seem more attractive than perhaps it is. In view of this, it is refreshing to read the following comment:

> ... there has been a tendency over the years for sociologists of education to assume that evidence that is quantitative is automatically 'scientific' in character. Ethnomethodologists have effectively deflated this myth, but their own criticism of measurement techniques often becomes a critique of the use of all statistical data (Karabel and Halsey, 1977:57).

Sociology of Sport and Physical Education

There are many parallels between sociology of education and sociology of sport; for every instance where 'sociology of education' has appeared in this section, 'sociology of sport' could legitimately be substituted. The progression has been similar, from a discipline dominated by the structural-functional approach to a discipline which recognizes many other theoretical approaches. In the sociology of education, Young (1977) and Keddie (1977) have done much to advance the use of the interpretative paradigm in research. In the sociology of sport there has also been an increase in the use of the interpretative paradigm. Lueschen (1980:332) suggests that this 'new' research stems

largely from the phenomenological tradition. The struggle for recognition of these new methods by their proponents (Whitson, 1976; 1978a; 1978b; Wohl,1975) has been a slow one, for as Picou (1979) suggests, the interpretative paradigm is probably the least well developed. [13] The reason that this 'new' paradigm struggles for recognition has been summarized by Sage:

> ...the quest for objectivity, increasingly sophisticated statistical techniques, and the convenience of the computer has accelerated the trend toward quantitative empiricism with a corresponding trend to debunk methodologies which employ qualitative techniques (Sage, 1979:56).

It was Ritzer (1975) in a book entitled *Sociology: A Multiple Paradigm Science* who constructed an image of three dominant paradigms vying for hegemony. It is this image of competing paradigms which has been one of the major themes in many of the 'state-of-the-art' articles on the sociology of sport (See for example Lueschen,1980; Snyder and Spreitzer, 1979; Sage, 1979). Another topic of concern in these articles is the relationship between sociology, education and physical education.

The lack of communication and interdisciplinary dialogue between sociology, education and physical education is evident when one reviews the courses offered by the respective University Departments. How many sociology departments offer courses on the sociology of sport?

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[13] Within this paradigm Picou includes the theories of symbolic interaction and phenomenology. The exemplars of these theories being Ball (1976) and Allen and Fahey (1977).

Relatively few university sociology departments offer such a course, which is quite anomalous when one considers how pervasive sport is in our society. By the same token, within university education departments how many courses on the sociology of education make any reference to physical education? If the content of sociology text books is anything to judge by, very few references are made. [14] That this should be the case is very surprising when one thinks of some of the more traditional ideas upon which both European and North American education was based: '*mens sana, in corpore sano*' and the belief in 'muscular Christianity'.

Even within the existing sociology of sport literature, physical education is rarely discussed. When it does appear, either in articles and anthologies or other texts, discussion mainly concerns the socializing aspects of physical education (For example Hart and Birrell, 1981. The exceptions being Buhrmann and Bratton, 1978; Feltz, 1979; and Friesen, 1968).

There have been many advances within physical education since the days of 'drill' and 'physical training instruction'. Despite having become a central part of the curriculum in the high school system, physical education has struggled in institutions of higher education. In many institutions, both in Canada and Europe, the physical education department exists to provide facilities for

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[14] For example, the following texts do not have a single reference to physical education or sport in their indices; Murphy, 1979; Karabel and Halsey, 1977; Meighan, 1981.

recreational and competitive activities, rather than existing to provide a centre for research into sport. However, within those institutions of higher education in which physical education is regarded as an academic subject, there have been fundamental changes:

> Physical education has broken out of the constraints of viewing human movement as a narrow biophysical phenomenon; moreover, it has begun to move beyond the bromides such as 'sport builds character' and has taken steps toward employing sociological theory and methodology in studying sport and physical activity (Sage, 1979:54).

Conclusion

This chapter has briefly presented background information to two of the major disciplines related to the study: sociology (both of sport and education) and physical education. The discussion has shown that although research in both the sociology of education and the sociology of sport has, over the past two decades, emanated towards an 'interpretive' approach, this has often been done in isolation. It is the author's contention that this lack of cross-fertilization , between the two related sub-disciplines is detrimental to the refinement of the 'interpretive' approach to sociology. Therefore, by trying to stimulate sociological research based on such an approach (in physical education), this study hopes to promote the synthesis of the sociology of education and the sociology of sport and physical education.

Having considered in rather general terms the trends in research related to the study, the discussion changes focus in Chapter III, to discuss the theoretical concepts and perspectives which are central to this study.

III. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES AND RESEARCH RELATED TO 'FAILURE'

Introduction

The preceding chapter began by referring to a time when scientists were eclectic. Although this study is not eclectic in nature, it does attempt to draw upon several of the social sciences. The foundation of the study remains sociological, but concepts from psychology and social psychology shall also be discussed in this chapter. This section focuses upon the different approaches that various researchers have adopted when studying 'failure' in sport.

One of the most obvious questions concerning this type of research is: Why study 'failure' in sport, when surely we want people to succeed and enjoy themselves? Unfortunately, (as more and more people are realising) sport may not have as many positive consequences as was once thought. [15] Orlick sums up current opinion on the value of sport:

> For every positive psychological or social outcome in sport, there are possible negative outcomes. For example, sports can offer a child group membership or group exclusion, acceptance or rejection, positive feedback, a sense of accomplishment or a sense of failure, evidence of self-worth or a lack of evidence of self-worth. Likewise, sports can develop cooperation and a concern for the other, but they can also develop intense rivalry and a complete lack of concern for others (in Eitzen and Sage, 1978:91).

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[15] Pooley critiques the current model regarding competitiveness in sport which he regards as being dominated by professionalism and institutionalisation (1979:76).

As sport (in some form) is often part of the socialization process, [16] the types of experiences that children are and should be exposed to are gaining increasing attention. Physical educators have been re-evaluating the content of their programmes and a wave of 'humanism' has swept over sport: community leagues have rules which ensure that kids get to play for so many minutes in each game, and 'mini' types of games have been developed (i.e. mini-volleyball and mini-soccer, where the dimensions of the equipment used have been scaled down for the participants) to make the game more enjoyable.

The measures taken by community leagues and sports governing bodies to make their activities more accessible and more enjoyable to children are welcome changes, but the occurrence of failure in sport is still there. The fact that 'failure' is such a common phenomenon in children's sport is seen by many as being problematic:

> Only those children who have been winners, or believe they have a chance of winning, will continue to seek out competitive athletic experiences. It is for those children who never succeed, or who succeed only on rare occasions, that the process of competitive athletics must be re-evaluated (Gerson, 1977:4).

This process of re-evaluating athletic competition is at the centre of the current debate on the form that children's sport should take. Almost any definition of 'sport' includes some element of competition, and as mentioned in Chapter I,

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[16] McPherson provides an excellent discussion on socialization into and through sport (in Lueschen and Sage, 1981:246-273).

competition can take many forms (for example: team vs. team; individual vs. individual; or competition with self). That this is so, implies that the outcome of this competitive activity may be understood in terms of being successful or being unsuccessful. In other words, failure is inherent in a competitive environment: it cannot be avoided. Tutko and Bruns point out that:

> Losing is an integral, yet badly abused, aspect of athletic competition. Losers greatly outnumber winners, and even winners stand to be losers the next day, the next week, or the next season. But nobody knows how to lose. We're not trained to lose...(1976:29).

There emerges from the debate, three lines of argument: firstly, there is the assertion that sport is good and that experiencing failure in sport prepares a child for experiences of failure in life. The second line of argument recognizes the value of competition as a socializing agent, but admits that experiences of failure may result in only relatively few children being able to reap the benefits of competition. The final line of argument asserts that there is enough competition in life without the creation of contrived competition. This position sees the disadvantages of competition as outweighing the advantages, and therefore competition should be abolished.

This study aligns itself with the second position: that competition can be beneficial, but that too much emphasis has been placed upon winning, and therefore too little concern had been paid to occurrences of failure. As Gerson

suggests, what is needed is a re-evaluation of the competitive process in athletics (1977:4). Work has already been done in an effort to re-evaluate the competitive process (Ogilvie and Tutko, 1971; Tutko and Bruns, 1976a, 1976b; Orlick, 1972, 1974, 1980; Orlick and Botterill, 1974; Scott, 1974), although Scott's paper is one of the few to have paid attention to the try-out process. As shall be evident from the following discussion concerning existing research in both psychology and sociology of sport, little attention has been paid to the type of failure experienced when an individual tries to become part of the 'athletic scene', but is unsuccessful.

Psychological Approach to Failure

When an individual experiences failure a question which is often asked (either by themselves or by others) is "Why did I/you fail? This desire for a causal explanation of an event is present in every aspect of life, [17] although it is usually only if things are upset (i.e. we fail to accomplish a task which we had expected to accomplish) that we seek such explanations. By seeking explanations, the hope is that a similar failure may be avoided in the future. Although there are several theories of attribution, [18] an all

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[17] Because causal explanations are sought of *everyday* events this area of psychology was originally called 'naive' psychology (McHugh et al., 1978:173), but is now called attribution theory (Carron and Spink, 1980).

[18] See for example: Carron and Spink, 1980; Kukla, 1972; Kelley, 1967.

encompassing definition is suggested by Carron and Spink:

> Attribution theory is a cognitive approach to motivation which focuses on the way in which people form causal interpretations for their personal behavior and the behavior of others (1980:19).

When studying achievement situations such as sport, researchers have relied upon a theory of attribution first developed by Heider (1958) and later developed by Weiner (1972). Central to the theory are the four perceived causes of failure or success: luck, task difficulty, ability and effort. As McHugh et al point out, these causes can be classified along three dimensions: internal-external; stable-unstable; and intentional-unintentional (1978:175). Using these three dimensions, ability and effort are viewed as being internally controlled, whilst luck and task difficulty are externally controlled (i.e. weather conditions or the skill of the opposing team). Along the dimension of stable-unstable, ability and task difficulty are regarded as being relatively stable, whereas luck and effort are more prone to fluctuations and are therefore unstable. The dimension of intentional-unintentional helps differentiate between effort and mood as it refers to the degree of control an individual has over their actions. Despite the hypothesized differences in causal attributions made in achievement situations by males and females (McHugh et al ., 1978; Iso-Ahola, 1979) and those between low achievers and high achievers(Smith, 1978; Bostian and Gardiner, 1981), one trend is evident:

> There is an egocentric tendency on the part of both individuals and groups to accept the responsibility for success but to avoid the responsibility for failure (Carron and Spink, 1980:19).

When failure does occur, and occurs repeatedly, it has been suggested that learned helplessness develops. Formulated by Seligman, learned helplessness has been described as:

> ... a psychological state that frequently results when events or behaviors are uncontrollable (Iso-Ahola, 1980: 120).

Three factors have been identified by Seligman as leading to learned helplessness: firstly, the experience of uncontrollability (no matter how much ability an individual may have or how much effort they put into performing a task, they never seem to accomplish it); secondly, chance comments (when a person is told that their efforts are futile); and finally, external personality (connected to the first factor, and means that the individual believes that things which are central to his or her life, are not under his or her control) (Iso-Ahola, 1980:121). When it occurs, learned helplessness tends to produce what Iso-Ahola calls three 'deficiencies' in humans; firstly, it decreases the motivation to initiate action; secondly, it retards the ability to learn, perceive and believe that one's behaviour has been successful, when it has; and thirdly, it disturbs the emotional balance and increases anxiety and depression (1980:120).

Although few sport related studies have been carried out combining learned helplessness and causal attribution,

it is possible to hypothesize how the two might be synthesized (Iso-Ahola, 1980:121). For example an individual who loses every squash game he or she plays, may (according to Seligman's causal factors of learned helplessness) begin to feel that they have no control over the outcome. Depending not only upon what the individual attributed these feelings of helplessness, and the reality of failure to (for example, dispositional factors such as lack of ability or effort or situational attributions such as bad luck), one of three conclusions could be reached. If only dispositional attributions were made, it is likely that generalized helplessness ('I always perform poorly') would develop. If only situational attributions were made, 'avoided helplessness'[19] is more likely. Perhaps the most common situation is where both dispositional and situational attributions are made ('well I suppose I could have tried harder, but my teammates are not very good'), resulting in 'discriminated helplessness' (my performance is only poor when I play with those teammates).

Both Smith (1978) and Iso-Ahola (1980), in appraising the potential contribution of attribution theory to sport, suggest that coaches and educators should avoid exposing individuals to repeated failure which may lead to learned helplessness. When failure does occur, Iso-Ahola (1980:122) suggests that efforts should be made to prevent

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[19] "I did well but others screwed it up" (Iso-Ahola, 1980:121).

dispositional attributions being made, thereby reducing the possibility of learned helplessness developing. [20]

Undoubtedly, attribution theory and learned helplessness are of value in explicating the cognitive machinations that take place as a result of experiencing failure (or experiencing the threat of failure). As more research (done in the field and not in the psychology laboratory) is completed, coaches should become more knowledgeable about certain aspects of failure.

Despite the progress in attribution theory, research in sport has tended to concentrate on only certain types of failure, and only upon cognitive or psychological reactions to that failure. Many studies have, by virtue of the type of questions asked, unwittingly restricted their definition of failure to the experience of failure as the result of losing a game or competition.[21] Instances of failure, experienced as a result of being 'cut' from a team have been sadly neglected, which is surprising since the selection process has been described as a 'necessary evil' of competitive sport. It is hardly surprising that research into learned helplessness has relied upon the 'win-loss' phenomena, as most people only try-out for one team every season, and as

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[20] Rejeski (1980:36), in contrast to Iso-Ahola, advises that coaches should not foster the use of external (situational) attributions for failure, but that athletes should be trained to make attributions to internal/ unstable facets of the team and/or individual.

[21] For example: Iso-Ahola, 1975, 1979; Roberts and Pascuzzi, 1979; Duquin, 1977; Yukelson et al , 1981; Weinberg and Jackson, 1979; McCaughan and McKinlay, 1981.

learned helplessness can only result from repeated failure, the problems of finding a sample (in the field) would be immense. Due to the cognitive nature of attribution theory, little attention has been paid to the social interaction which structures the 'failure' process. The fact that several attribution studies have been performed in contrived, laboratory-like environments [22] is evidence of the perceived lack of importance of the social milieu within which the 'actual' failing experiences take place. Despite these criticisms, this study does not intend to ignore the contributions of attribution theory and learned helplessness, instead these contributions form part of the information background against which the study is set.

Sociological Approach to Failure

It would appear that some psychologists have a rather narrow interpretation of failure, but what of sociologists, how have they attempted to study failure? Ball, in a stimulating paper on failure in sport, has one answer to this question:

> ...as a socially problematic phenomenon it (failure) is one which sociologists themselves, as in the case of sport generally, have given relatively scant attention or consideration (1976:726).

Two of the most significant contributions to the 'failure in sport' literature by sociologists have been made by Ball(1976) and Harris and Eitzen(1978). Due to the paucity

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[22] For example: Weinberg and Jackson, 1979; Yukelson et al, 1981; McCaughan and McKinlay, 1981.

of research in this area, this study draws heavily upon many of the ideas raised in these papers (especially Ball's).

Ball defines failure in sport by using two dimensions: a performance factor and its consequence. Failure is, therefore, regarded as being the inability (for whatever reason) to satisfy the standards of a goal-related performance. This in turn, leads to the separation, or estrangement, of the 'failed' from the desired position (Ball, 1976:726). Ball sees reactions to such failure [23] as falling into two categories: group reactions and personal reactions (1976:727). Although the focus of this study is upon group reactions, reference shall be made, however, to what Ball calls personal reactions to failure which are often characterized by embarrassment and role distance. Gross and Stone suggest that:

> Embarrassment occurs whenever some *central* assumption in a transaction has been *unexpectedly* and unqualifiedly discredited for at least one participant (1964:2).[24]

Gross and Stone also suggest that the ability to carry out a role includes the presence of identity and poise and that the assumptions each individual involved holds about the other in interaction is accurate. If one of these three elements is put at risk, role performance may be impossible.

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[23] As was briefly mentioned in Chapter I, failure is regarded as being genuine only when it lacks volition (i.e. dropping-out is a form of voluntary failure which results in disengagement, but being cut from a team is a form of involuntary disengagement, and is therefore genuine).

[24] In *Interaction Ritual*, Erving Goffman discusses the causes and effects of embarrassment.

For example, embarrassment may result if, in interaction, one individual claims that they are particularly skilled at an activity but when put to the test, the individual is not as skilled as they first claimed. Embarrassment often results in role distance, whereby the embarrassed individual wishes to withdraw from the social situation in which the embarrassment occurred. The frequently used term, "I wish the ground would have swallowed me up," refers not only to the desire, which is often experienced to cover one's face, but also to the desire to distance one's self from the threatening social situation. Ball also suggests that group reactions can take at least two forms: 'degradation' and 'cooling-out'.

Harold Garfinkel (1956:420) was the one who coined the phrase 'degradation ceremonies' in referring to the transformation of an individual's identity [25] into an identity lower down the hierarchical structure of the group or organization. Garfinkel suggests that degradation ceremonies are one form of moral indignation which has a certain 'behavioral paradigm' of public denunciation (1956:421). The act of public denunciation literally involves the destruction of the previous identity and by virtue of creating a new identity, the 'denunciated' becomes a 'new' person in the eyes of the denunciators.

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[25] Garfinkel stresses that the identities must be 'total' identities: they must refer to persons as motivational types (what the group supposes are the reasons for their performance) rather than behavioural types (what the person may have been expected to have done)(1956:420).

Garfinkel outlines several points which should be adhered to if a 'good' denunciation is to take place. Three are summarized as follows; firstly, the event and the perpetrator should be seen as being different from their everyday character; secondly, the denouncer must act as if he or she is fulfilling the wishes of the witnesses and as such detach themselves from the 'denunciated' and identify with the witnesses. Finally, the denunciated must be defined as being an 'outsider'.

In contrast to this form of identity destruction, is another form of involuntary disengagement called 'cooling-out'. This term, adopted from a type of criminal activity, has been used by Erving Goffman in discussing adaptation to failure.[26] 'Cooling the mark out' refers to a stage in the confidence game when the confidence tricksters have successfully conned the 'mark' (the victim of the con) and all that remains to be done is what is called the 'blowoff' or 'sting' (when the tricksters leave with their money). Sometimes, after the 'sting' some of the victims may seek revenge or justice, thereby causing problems for the confidence tricksters. To avoid trouble, one of the tricksters may stay behind to 'cool' the mark out. As Goffman suggests, the 'cooler' practises the art of consolation:

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[26] The following discussion on 'cooling-out' draws heavily upon Goffman's paper "Cooling the mark out: some aspects of adaptation to failure". As this is the case, after the first reference all the subsequent references shall contain only the page number.

> An attempt is made to define the situation for the mark in a way that makes it easy for him to accept the inevitable and quietly go home. The mark is given instruction in the philosophy of taking a loss (1952:452).

Goffman continues to outline three ways in which individuals may lose a role: they may be promoted out of it; they may abdicate it; or they may be involuntarily deprived of it. Involuntary loss is itself of two types: firstly, status may be lost in such a way that the loss is not taken as a reflection upon the loser. An example of this from high school basketball would be the junior high school team member, who having gone into grade twelve is no longer able to continue to play junior-aged basketball. Secondly, the converse may apply, when the loss does reflect unfavorably upon the loser. To develop the previous example, the grade twelve, now ineligible to play on the junior team tries out for the senior team and fails to make it. The loser does not actually need to have occupied the role, but the fact that he or she had <u>openly</u> committed themselves to preparing for it is enough.

The process of cooling the mark out may be done in a variety of ways, but in the following passage, Goffman presents a general description of how the mark should be managed:

> For the mark, cooling represents a process of adjustment to an impossible situation arising from having defined himself in a way which the social facts come to contradict. The mark must therefore be supplied with a new set of apologies for himself, a new framework in which to see himself and judge himself. A process of redefining the self along defensible lines must be investigated and carried

> along; since the mark himself is frequently in too weakened a condition to do this, the cooler must initially do it for him (p. 456).

The cooling out task may be more effective if given to an individual who is able to relate to the mark. Parallels may be drawn to other aspects of life, for example, a priest talking to a dying person , as Goffman suggests, must not so much save a soul as create one that is consistent with what is about to become of it (p. 457).[27]

As well as redefining a 'spoiled identity"[28] there are several other ways in which the mark may be cooled out. The mark may be offered a status which, although of lesser importance than the previously held status, still offers some status. Alternatively, the mark may be offered another chance to retain or attain the desired status. The cooler may also allow the mark to make the scene, that the cooler was supposedly then to avoid, in the hope that there will be a cathartic release of emotions; or the mark may be stalled, in the hope that any anger will dissipate and that the individual given the time, will adjust to the new status (p. 259).

The cooling out process, however, is not problem free, since the mark may not want to be 'cooled-out'. Goffman suggests ways whereby these potential problems may be overcome: firstly, efforts may be made during selection

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[27] In sport, one could envisage the 'cooler' as being a counsellor helping athletes establish an identity which is consistent with their status.

[28] A term borrowed from Goffman's *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Identities* 1963.

processes to weed out those who, it is perceived, may cause trouble at a later date. A second alternative is to "carry" the individual even though they may not be fulfilling the role expectations. [29]

At this point, having described the many forms which cooling-out may take, it would be expedient to pause and consider some concepts which are central to the discussion: identity, role and status passage. As was mentioned in the introductory section of this chapter, Mead declared that each individual has a self, and that each individual can be the object of his or her own actions; in other words, individuals may act toward themselves as they act toward others (Blumer, 1969:79). Linked to this is Charles Horton Cooley's concept of the looking-glass self, which suggests that the individual is constructed by an individual reacting to how he or she perceives they are judged by another individual (Secord and Backman, 1974:528). During interaction, individuals assume roles, and they tend to act in accordance with role expectations which leads to the establishment of role identities. Anselm Strauss describes identity in the following way:

> ... identity is connected with the fateful appraisals made of oneself - by oneself, and by others. Everyone presents himself to others and to himself, and sees himself in the mirror of their judgements. The masks he then and thereafter presents to the world and its citizens are fashioned

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[29] For the latter to occur in a sports situation is unusual, because coaches usually decide that they do not have enough time to coach 'extras' because their priorities lie with the team.

upon his anticipation of their judgements (1959:9) Berger and Luckmann (1967:173), when discussing identity as an element of subjective reality, stress how it exists in a dialectical relationship with society, since not only do social processes shape identity, but identites can also react to the social structure by maintaining or modifying it.

As social beings we occupy roles; some are of relatively short duration (i.e. student) and others are of considerably longer duration (i.e. daughter). Other people who occupy the same type of role are regarded as being in the same role category, and are therefore subject to the same role expectations. Role expectations are expectations held by others as to how the role should be performed. When role expectations are not entrenched it is possible for role negotiation to take place whereby the role encumbent and those he or she is interacting with may negotiate how each will behave in certain situations.

Of similar nature to a role, is a status position. A status could be described as a socially defined role position.[30] Of concern here is the concept of status passage: the movement from one status to another. Much of this work has been done by Glaser and Strauss (1970,1971), although earlier work was done by Roth (1963). The following

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[30] Status, here is not used in the restrictive sense of an elevated social position. A status may also be a combination of several roles. The attainment of a status requires that an individual has certain experience and meets the required standards (Strauss, 1959:101).

section outlines the characteristics of status passages delineated by Glaser and Strauss (1971).[31] Status passages have been described as those passages which:

> may entail movement into a different part of a social structure; or a loss or gain of privilege, influence, or power, and a changed identity and sense of self, as well as changed behavior (Glaser and Strauss, 1971:2).

Most status passages have the following three characteristics: firstly, they are usually governed by fairly explicit rules controlling not only when the status change may take place, but also who is the subject of the change and which agency is structuring the change. Secondly, passages usually have prescribed sequences of steps which the "passagee" must go through to complete the passage. Finally, many status passages are so scheduled and regularized that many contain elements of ritual. Unscheduled passages also exhibit elements of regularization and ritual: take for example death, which, although it may be an unscheduled passage as far as the passagee is concerned, is inevitable. It therefore has certain prescribed rules and steps such as the awareness of death, the pronouncement of death, the signing of the death certificate, and the funeral. Work of note on death and dying has been done by Kubler-Ross (1969,1975) and Glaser and Strauss (1970). There are a further twelve properties

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[31] As with an earlier section on Goffman's concept of 'cooling-out', after the first reference, any subsequent references shall contain only the page numbers when referring to Glaser and Strauss' book, *Status Passage*.

which status passages may or may not possess. Those twelve properties shall be discussed in relation to their applicability to aspects of sport. [32]

A passage may be regarded as being *desirable* (i.e. becoming eligible to play for an older age-group team) or *undesirable* (i.e. when moving into an older age-group team will mean less playing time and less enjoyment). An unscheduled passage is frequently experienced as being undesirable. For example the athlete who is seriously injured and thereby forced to retire will most likely view this unscheduled passage from athlete to nonathlete as undesirable (unless he or she had intended to retire in the near future anyway). It would be logical to assume that if a passage is desirable, it is also *voluntary*, and vice versa, if a passage is involuntary, it will also be to some degree undesirable. This study is primarily concerned with being 'cut' from a team as an example of involuntary disengagement from sport. As an involuntary status passage it is also assumed that it is undesirable. [33]

Some passages may be *inevitable*, for example, having to move up into a different age-group team; being 'cut' from a team however, is not inevitable. Passages may also be *reversible* , for example, moving up from the second string team may easily be reversed and the individual may be

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[32] A synopsis of these properties of status passages may be found in Glaser and Strauss (1971:4-5).
[33] The accuracy of this assumption will be examined in the discussion.

demoted.[34] Not only are the methods of demotion of interest, so too, are the consequences of demotion. More (1962) considered the effect the demotion had upon the company as a whole[35] and also the effects it had upon the individual. As a result of demotion, some individuals appeared to demonstrate increasing resistance to authority, others became lethargic. A more subtle reaction to demotion observed by More and his associates was the affective withdrawal of the individual from group contacts which resulted in "a kind of non-communicative blandness in social contacts in the work situation" (More, 1962:219). Affective withdrawal by individuals in sport is most commonly witnessed in instances whereby players have been substituted off the field, or perhaps when they did not play several games in a row, and they 'switch-off' from the play. Signs that a player has 'switched-off' include a lack of concern about the outcome of the game, decreased social interaction between the individual and the other players on the bench, and an increase in the physical distance between the individual and the place 'where the action is'.

In some cases, passages are *repeatable*. For example an athlete who tries out for a team may be cut during the first stage of the try-outs, but convince the coach that he or she should be allowed another try-out after which they are cut

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[34] More (1962) has observed at least eleven types of demotion, which are similar to methods which would be used when cooling out an individual.
[35] More's research was conducted in business and industry.

again. The temporal nature of a status passage is of significance, because although the previous example is not encountered very often, it is more common for an athlete to be cut the following year, thereby repeating the status passage of player to nonplayer. Until this point, reference has been made only to *individuals* going through status passages, but *groups* of people also go through status passages. Passages may be *solo* (where although the controlling agent may be in a group, it is just the individual who is the passagee), or *collective* (for example a group of athletes trying out for a team: they will all pass through similar stages at the same time in the same social situation), or *aggregate* (when several individuals may pass through the same stage and yet not even be aware that others are doing the same thing : i.e. other athletes retiring.)

As an agent who controls the passages of many athletes, the coach is able to create either a *closed* or *open* awareness around the status passage. For instance, an individual may not know that the coach is considering cutting him or her until it is too late, the cuts have been made, and extra practising will not help.[36]

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[36] Glaser and Strauss discuss at length aspects of closed and open awareness contexts as experienced by dying patients (1970), and they also make the distinction (1971) between those instances where the passagee is aware, but they are also unable (not allowed) to communicate with others going through the same passage, and those instances when the passagee is both aware and free to communicate.

Generally it is the agent who has control over the passage (and over the passagee), but in some cases, the passagee may be able to gain some *control*. By increasing control over a passage an individual may be able to reverse an undesirable passage (i.e. the athlete may convince the coach to give him/her another chance and by making the team after the first attempt failed, the athlete has reversed the passage of player to non-player). Some passages also require *legitimation*: for example a doctor has to sign the death certificate, and in some sports it is usually the coach who informs the athlete whether they have been cut or not.

In some ways status passages are similar to attribution theory in so far as both could be called "naive": they are part of our everyday world. Some passages lack *clarity* because there are not many signs which indicate 'this is a status passage'. Other passages seem less 'naive', or taken for granted, because the signs are more visible . In some cases the signs may be clear, but for some reason (i.e. disguise) the passagees may not be aware of them. An example of signs being disguised relates to the concept of a 'closed awareness' situation, where an individual may be dying, and tests prove this, but the individual is not informed: the signs are withheld or disguised.

Despite these properties which may or may not be present in any given passage, two factors may crucially affect how the passagee reacts to the passage. The first concerns the centrality of the passage to the indivdual (how

important it is) and the second concerns the duration of the passage. One would assume that the longer one has spent in a passage, the more central it becomes to that individual. [37]

Status passages do not occur in isolation, since like roles, individuals may be going through several passages simultaneously. When an individual is involved in several related passages it is usually called a 'career'. A 'career' has also been referred to as a 'timetable': both serve as heuristic devices for understanding the complex social interaction which occurs within a certain time span and within a certain group (see Roth, 1963). [38]

As comprehensive as Ball's definition of failure is, it is incomplete, as Harris and Eitzen (after Blumer) have pointed out:

> Failure is not only a performance evaluation as defined by others, it is also a self-evaluation, a self-definition, which takes into account the reactions of the significant others of the performer (1978:179).

This re-interpretation of failure means that:

> to understand a failure and a failure reaction adequately, both group and personal factors must be examined, along with the social-organizational milieu in which the failure occurs (Harris and Eitzen, 1978:180).

The analysis of failure, however, should go further still: not only should group and personal factors be examined, but they should be examined in such a way that the actor's point

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[37] The accuracy of this assertion will be discussed in Chapter V .

[38] Studies by Faulkner (1975) and Haerle (1975), both develop the concept of career contingencies in sport.

of view is expressed. An outsider may decide that because an individual has tried unsuccessfully to make a team for three years in a row, he or she is a failure: one cannot tell, until one begins to identify with the actor. To identify with the actor, the researcher must endeavour to take the 'role of the other' to truly comprehend the reality of the situation for that individual.

Conclusion

Beginning with a brief discussion on the competitive process in sport, both the psychological and sociological approaches to failure were studied. Although psychologists were praised for the attention they have paid to failure in sport, it was felt that their analysis was restricted by the lack of consideration for the social milieu within which the failure occurred. Despite the fact that there have been few sociological studies on failure in sport, what has been done (principally by Ball, 1976), has provided much 'food for thought'. Of central concern to Ball were group reactions to failure, and he outlined two procedural scripts of 'degradation' and 'cooling-out'.[39] These reactions to failure, however, do not need to be regarded as separate since they are two sides of the same coin. Moreover, these reactions are stages in a status passage. By analyzing failure within the context of status passages the whole

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[39] He also referred to personal reactions to failure: 'role distance' and 'embarrassment'.

'career' of the failure occurrence can be studied. [40] The 'career' of failure includes the structural conditions which have created the possibility of failure (in competitive sport this would be the selection process); the interaction between the passagee (athlete) and the controlling agent (coach); and the characteristics of the passage itself (i.e. reversible, involuntary, undesirable).

'Failure' in sport (delimited in this study as being involuntary disengagement), is therefore regarded as being one of the many status passages which occurs in sport. The following chapter presents not only an account of the methods and procedures used to study this status passage, but it also contains a preamble explaining the influence that 'interpretive' sociology has had upon the selection of research methods.

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[40] My thanks go to Susan Birrell of The University of Iowa, for bringing my attention to the parallels that can be drawn between involuntary disengagement and status passages (or the reversals thereof).

IV. CONTRIBUTION OF "INTERPRETIVE" SOCIOLOGY: METHODS, PROCEDURES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Introduction

The preceeding chapters form the background to this study by presenting briefly some of the literature and research directly concerned with involuntary disengagement from high school sport. An attempt has also been made to illustrate the explicative potential of some concepts (i.e. 'cooling-out', 'degradation' and status passage) which have rarely been associated with amateur (and in particular high school) sport. As has been suggested in Chapter I, for the discovery of grounded theory to be possible the research process must be flexible. This flexibility, inherent in the methods used, allows for the constant generating and verifying of substantive theory and subsequent revision of that theory. The position taken here is that the extent to which theory can be generated from the positivist techniques generally associated with the logico-deductive paradigm is limited.[41]

To allow for the discovery of grounded theory, different methods are used than those employed for testing a priori hypotheses. The bulk of this chapter is concerned with the methods and procedures used in this study, which allowed for the discovery of grounded theory. As a precursor to the methodological discussion, there is a brief

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[41] This paradigm necessitates the formulation of a priori hypotheses which are only revised at the end of the research process.

discussion of the theoretical background and epistemological assumptions upon which the methods are based.

Although the title of this chapter uses the term 'interpretive' sociology," it could just as easily have read " 'qualitative' sociology" or perhaps even " 'humanistic' sociology". The fact that such substitution could occur, without many eyebrows being raised, is an indication of the semantic fuzziness which seems to be a hallmark of the social sciences.[42] To say, however, that " 'interpretive' sociology" could just as easily have been replaced by 'qualitative' or 'humanistic' is not quite true. 'Interpretive', as used here, intends to convey the idea that social action and interaction are arrived at through a process of interpretation and negotiation. 'Qualitative' and 'humanistic' tend only to convey the idea that the individual is often the starting point and center of the research process.

The genera of interpretive sociology sees human reality as being socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Holzner, 1968). In other words, our identity or our sense of self, is arrived at through interaction with society. This understanding of social reality is in complete contrast to positivists who, following the functionalist model, see human reality as being formed and moulded by

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[42] To an 'outsider' (to borrow Becker's term) any of the terms used would probably suffice, because each conveys the idea that the overriding concern is for quality in the data and not necessarily quantity.

society, with little opportunity for interaction to occur.[43] Within this 'interpretive' genera there are several perspectives which have informed and greatly influenced the methods used in this study; namely symbolic interaction, phenomenology and ethnomethodology. It seems in order, therefore, to outline the applicability that these perspectives have to this study before describing the actual procedures used. The following descriptions of these perspectives may seem rather superficial, but the aim is only to highlight those aspects which are deemed pertinent to this study.

Symbolic Interaction

The tenets of symbolic interaction provide the base upon which much of this study is founded. In the following description of symbolic interaction, Herbert Blumer (a modern day proponent of the Chicago School [44] identifies some of its distinguishing features:

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[43] Interaction may still occur but change through personal action is severely limited due to static nature of society from a functionalist perspective.

[44] The 'Chicago School', refers to a group of symbolic interactionists, who whilst at the University of Chicago came under the influence of Herbert Blumer's interpretation of Mead's theory of interaction. In theoretical opposition to the 'Chicago School' was the 'Iowa School" at the State University of Iowa, where Manford Kuhn interpreted Mead's theory of interaction in a different way. Meltzer and Petras (in Manis and Meltzer, 1972 (2nd.Ed.)) provide an excellent discussion on, "The Chicago and Iowa Schools of Symbolic Interaction.")

> The term "symbolic interaction" refers, of course, to the peculiar and distinctive character of interaction as it takes place between human beings. The peculiarity consists in the fact that human beings interpret or "define" each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions...Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's actions(Blumer in Rose, 1962:180).

As the above quotation implies, Blumer has a strong dislike of approaches which interpret human interaction as simply 'stimulus' and 'response'. During interaction, Blumer sees any 'response' as being:

> ...not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meaning which they attach to such actions(in Rose,1962:180).

The extent to which individuals rely upon symbolic interaction becomes evident when those individuals are located in a different environment or even a different culture and things are said, or signs are made which are misinterpreted. They are not misinterpreted because the words or the signs are incorrect, they are misinterpreted because the meanings which are attached to those actions are considerably different from one environment to another. This process of interpretation, however, is much more than a process by which an individual picks up the cues and communication signals as expressed by another person. For interaction to occur on a meaningful basis (in other words, for understanding to occur) the individual must take the role of the other, by imagining how the other defines and evaluates the communication (Open University, 1972:20). The ability to do this presupposes that the individual can act

towards him or herself. As Blumer explains:

> This mechanism enables the human being to make indication to himself of things in his surroundings and thus to guide his actions by what he does (Blumer in Rose, 1962:181).

It is this concept of the self (which has been attributed to George Herbert Mead) which is one of the main distinguishing features between the Chicago and Iowa 'schools'. The Chicago tradition developed by Mead, Park and Thomas, and propounded more recently in the work of Herbert Blumer, considers the 'self' as a process of interaction between the 'I' and the 'me'. This process has been described by Meltzer and Petras as an internal conversation during which the actor can come to view self in a new way, and by doing so, bring changes about in the self. The Iowa 'school' represented by much of Manford Kuhn's work maintains that there is no 'I' in self, just the 'me'. The resultant view of self, therefore, is much more structured and deterministic, for without the interaction between the 'I' and the 'me' there can be no reflexive process.

The orientation of this study will be that of the Chicago 'school' which views society as being constructed by the reflexive interaction of individuals. The implications this approach may have upon any research into social action are wide ranging, although of particular concern here is the influence this view of the self has upon the notions of role performance, status and identity. Moving from theory to method, Blumer suggests that:

> Insofar as sociologists or students of human society are concerned with the behavior of acting units, the position of symbolic interaction requires the student to catch the process of interpretation through which they construct their actions (Blumer in Rose, 1962:188).

Exactly how this study attempts to 'catch' the process of interpretation is described later in the chapter (see 'Methods and Procedures').

Phenomenology

Concerned with the construction of reality, phenomenology approaches the topic from a philosophical perspective. These philosophical roots have stimulated much debate as to whether there can ever be a phenomenological sociology. The debates often revert to a consideration of Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology which is strongly influenced by his background in psychology. By a process of phenomenological reduction[45] Husserl aims to get at the 'pure' stream of consciousness. His preoccupation with consciousness, however, has led to many criticisms concerning the psychologistic nature of his work. It has been through the work of Alfred Schutz (a student of

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[45] Phenomenological reduction, as outlined by Husserl has three stages: retention, bracketing and eidetic reduction. Firstly, the phenomenological reduction should be performed on an experience (this could be an experience of an object i.e. a chair) held in retention (the immediate past: not yet a memory), once in retention, the experience is then bracketed (we suspend our belief in the experience). Once bracketed, 'free variation in phantasy' is performed to try and discover the universal features of the experience. In this final stage the imagination is used to vary the features of the experience (i.e. shape, colour, texture) in order to discover what its eidetic features (essences) are (Reeder, 1981:9-13).

Husserl's) that phenomenology has been brought to the attention of sociologists.

Schutz rejected Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and concentrated on constitutive phenomenology of the 'natural attitude' instead. The difference between these two types of phenomenology is that constitutive phenomenology is more concerned with how the 'natural attitude' is constructed rather than seeking the pure stream of consciousness which transcendental phenomenology sees as being the basis for transcendental intersubjectivity (Phillipson in Filmer et al.,1972:133). Schutz's interest in the constitution of the natural attitude was an outgrowth of his belief that the primary goal of the social sciences was to obtain organized knowledge of social reality. Schutz defined social reality as being the sum total of objects and occurrences within the social cultural world as experienced by the commonsense thinking of people in their everyday lives (Phillipson in Filmer et al., 1972:132).
With this definition in mind, it seems only logical that Berger and Luckmann (students of Husserl and Schutz) should have devoted much of their work to developing these ideas in studying the social construction of reality.

Phillipson outlines two methodological imperatives of phenomenology which can also be readily applied to concept clarification in sociology. The first necessitates describing the range of empirical meanings of concepts and their relationships to the individual's experiences in the

world. The second imperative demands an illustration of how the taken-for-granted 'naive world' concepts are constituted (Phillipson in Filmer et al., 1972:137). Combined, these imperatives render as problematic the everyday, mundane world in which we live. In this way a phenomenological approach to sociology has proved very useful insofar as it advocates a more critical look at our taken-for-granted life world.

Ethnomethodology

To be aware that we should render our life-world as being problematic and that critical questions should be asked is fine, but phenomenological sociology does little to suggest what type of questions should be asked. If the method of pure philosophical phenomenology is not appropriate to sociology, what else is there? One answer may lie with ethnomethodology, which as Phillipson claims, is an attempt to build up a sociology of everyday life (Phillipson in Filmer et al., 1972:140). Although the aim of ethnomethodology is similar to that of phenomenology, the methods used are quite different. The major proponents of ethnomethodology are Harold Garfinkel (who originally coined the term [46] and Aaron Cicourel.

One of the main beliefs of ethnomethodologists is that the only true way to discover how reality is constituted is to look at it when it is in disorder. The analogy can be

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[46] See Garfinkel in Turner, 1974:15.

made to a period in medical history when there was an overriding concern with pathology, which stemmed from a belief that only by looking at diseased bodies could the intricate workings of the healthy body be fully understood. Breakdowns in the social order, however, are less tangible and very unpredictable. Therefore, ethnomethodologists (especially the followers of Garfinkel), will often disrupt the social order, in any given situation, in order to render as problematic those actions and understandings which form part of our naive world. There are many rule-breaking experiments which follow in this tradition (see Garfinkel, 1967).

Binding these three perspectives together is their concern with the social construction of reality. Yet each perspective has the potential to enhance the study in a different way. Symbolic interaction's main contribution lies partly in the methods to be used, [47] but more so with regard to the elements and types of interaction i.e. role performance, identity and status. The phenomenological perspective advocates the adoption of research techniques which will not only provide a description of concepts but will also provide an illustration of how they are constituted. This seems to imply that the depth interview

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[47] Blumer suggests that to 'catch' the process of interpretation through which individuals construct their actions, the researcher must take the role of the acting unit (the role of the other), whose behaviour they are studying (Blumer in Rose, 1962:188). This, therefore, implies that participant observation be adopted as one of the main techniques.

technique may be useful in yielding information which may at least describe the concepts being studied. The problem of how these concepts are constituted would appear to fall into the realm of ethnomethodology (i.e. when these concepts are unstable, close observation and interviewing may yield some insights as to how they were originally constructed).

As can be seen from this cursory discussion, the research techniques to be used do not rest solely upon one method. In his book *The Research Act*, Norman Denzin advocates a process of triangulation, whereby at least three methods are used, in a complimentary fashion, in order to add to the 'thickness' of the data gathered.[48] By advocating this approach, Denzin goes one step beyond many apologists who begin their research report with the exculpatory clause of 'this is not the only method,' and stride on ahead anyway, regardless of how limiting their method may actually be.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to answering the following questions; 1. What methods were used in the study?; and 2. How were the methods employed?

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[48] In *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, methodological triangulation is just one of the triangulation processes which Denzin advocates. The others are; data triangulation (which concerns obtaining data from three different sources: time, space and persons); investigator triangulation; and theory triangulation.

Methods and Procedures

Phases of Research

During any type of study, qualitative or quantitative, The researcher must devote a large amount of time to the planning stages of the research. This planning stage may take various forms, but in this study the tentative research plans and possible theoretical concepts were set down on paper in the form of a horizontal analysis. This horizontal analysis requires the researcher to answer the following questions: What is the statement of the problem?; Who will the subjects be?; What methods will be used?; What type of information will these methods yield?; What form will the analysis of the data take? Basically, the horizontal analysis forces the researcher to answer-What?, Who?, Where? and How? Although the horizontal analysis outlines a plan that can be followed, it is a purely heuristic device. As such, the plans which are made, are not rigid, but flexible. It is this type of flexibility that Schatzman and Strauss encourage in research, when they state that:

> Method is seen by the field researcher as emerging from operations - from strategic decisions, instrumental actions, and analytic processes - which go on throughout the entire research enterprise...
>
> In field research a refashioning of design must go on through most of the work (Schatzman & Strauss, 1973:7).

The remainder of this section deals with the answers to these questions.

Selecting Research Subjects

Due to the emphasis of the study being upon amateur athletes and coaches it was decided to concentrate only upon those athletes and coaches who were participating in a highly structured, organized league competition. One other major consideration was the availability of the subject group to the researcher and also the amenability of the group toward the research project. A combination of these considerations led to several high school coaches being approached.[49] Contact was made first and then informal approval was granted by the coaches involved and the Physical Education staff. This paved the way to gaining official acceptance from both the Edmonton Public School Board and also the Edmonton Catholic School Board.

Initially, only one school was approached, and at the time it was thought that, based upon the numbers that had tried out the previous year, this would provide a sample of approximately twenty girls. Unfortunately, however, the coaches' predictions did not materialize and so after the first day of try-outs the search began again to find another school. Through contacts made at the first school (hereafter referred to as School A), which was part of the Edmonton Public School System, approval was gained from the physical education staff and basketball coaches at another school

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[49] At this point in the high schools athletic calendar, volleyball was just finishing and basketball was just about to begin. It was for this reason that basketball was the sport chosen for the study.

(hereafter referred to as School B), which was part of the Catholic School System. Between them, these two schools yielded a total sample of thirteen athletes who had failed to be selected for either the junior or senior team, and the six coaches who had cut these players.[50]

Documentary Research

In *Unobtrusive Measures: Nonreactive Research in the Social Sciences*, Webb et al. comment that using archival material such as public records or private correspondence is one way of reducing the reactive effects of much research. They continue to state that the use of such material may reduce the 'guineau pig' effect (the awareness of being tested), for often the material is written with some other purpose in mind (Webb et al., 1966: 13).

In this study, the collection of documentary data was limited due to the fact that neither the coaches nor the physical education staff accumulated much material other than game statistics and player information. There were two major sources of written material: one was the physical education coordinator in School A and the other was the junior coach and physical education teacher from School B. The fact that they produced the most material is hardly surprising, for they were the only people intimately

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[50] School A had two coaches for both the junior and senior teams (none of whom taught at the school) and School B just had one coach per team (the junior coach was the only girl's physical educator at the school).

involved with both the worlds of physical education and coaching. To some extent it was also part of their role as a physical education teacher to maintain records of student participation in physical activity and anything concerning the performance of the school teams. The material collected was used to construct a 'picture' of physical education in each school, as well as provide some background information about the teams and coaches.

Having made the initial contact with the senior coaches at School A, the Physical Education Coordinator was then approached for her approval. Not only did she give this, but she also informed the school principal of her approval. Through the coordinator permission was granted to use one of the classrooms for interviewing students. Whilst in conversation with the coordinator, during a number of occasions, the researcher was able to collect both written and verbal information on the school and its students. The other source of written material was the coach of the junior team at School B, again, written material was gathered mainly during informal conversation after the interview had taken place.

Participant Observation

For the purposes of this study, participant observation shall be regarded as being one method, and as such it will be defined as:

> a process in which the observer's presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation. The observer is in a face-to-face relationship with the observed, and, by participating with them in their natural life setting, he gathers data. Thus the observer is part of the context being observed, and he both modifies and is influenced by this context (Schwartz & Schwartz in McCall & Simmons, 1969:91).

McCall and Simmons, however, regard participant observation as being not just *one* method, but a combination or a blend of methods. Such a blend would comprise of:

> genuinely social interaction in the field with the research subjects, some direct observation of relevant events, some formal and a great deal of informal interviewing, some systematic counting, some collection of documents and artifacts, and open-endedness in the directions the study takes (McCall & Simmons, 1969:1).

As McCall & Simmons acknowledge, some would rather attach the label of field research to the afore mentioned techniques, rather than call it participant observation. Even amongst those researchers who would describe participant observation as being just *one* method, there is some discrepancy as to what exactly this method entails. Gold (1958), has developed the following classification scheme for participant observation, based upon the role of the researcher: complete participant; participant as observer; observer as participant; and complete observer. No matter what role the researcher decides to adopt, there are certain similarities in what he or she attempts to do.[51] These similarities are as follows: 1. to look at particular

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[51] The choice of role, it must be remembered may not be entirely up to the researcher since to some degree the research situation can dictate the style of observation.

social phenomena without preconceived notions as to their nature; 2. to understand how these phenomena are constructed in the everyday life of the 'insiders'; [52] and 3. to describe accurately these constructions as lived by the 'insiders'.

Participant observation, as a method, becomes problematic for many social scientists when the researcher becomes totally immersed in the field setting in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the social phenomena. Schwartz & Schwartz's definition of participant observation given at the beginning of this section has pointed to what some would regard as the beauty of the method, but what others would regard as its nemesis, namely, the intimacy which often develops between the observer and the observed. By interacting in the social milieux with the actors, the observer can gain valuable insights into the way these actors view their milieux. However, advocates of a purely positivist method would claim that for researchers to be in such close proximity to the actors is tantamount to 'scientific suicide', for it prompts questions as to the researcher's objectivity and about the validity of the 'insiders' statements. As Schwartz & Schwartz point out, the mere presence of the observer can influence the social phenomena and interaction, in a totally different way, than if he or she had not been present (Schwartz & Schwartz in

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[52] 'Insiders' refers to all those intimately involved in the research setting.

McCall & Simmons, 1969:94).

The involvment of the observer with the observed can be categorized as role participation and/or affective participation. Role participation is more within the control of the observer than affective participation, which occurs when the observer's emotional responses are evoked during interaction (Schwartz & Schwartz in McCall & Simmons, 1969:95). Schwartz & Schwartz continue to point out that every observer participates affectively to some degree and that the extent of role and affective participation can be placed on a passive-active continuum. On such a continuum 'pure' role participation would be located at the 'passive' end and 'pure' affective participation would be located at the active end.

In this study, the researcher attempted to follow Schwartz & Schwartz's suggestion that, the participant observer should maximize their participation with the subjects and share their life, not only on a personal level, but also on a planned role level (as participant observer and observed). The reason that any type of observation was undertaken, even due to the time constraints , was based partly upon the potential of the stimulated-recall technique. As a technique mainly used in educational research, stimulated-recall now makes use of video film, which when replayed can act as a stimulator during depth interviews. A typical research project employing such a technique could be an investigation of teacher-student

classroom interaction, where a film was made during the school day of the interaction and then was used subsequently during an interview with the teacher to stimulate the subject's powers of recall. Before the use of video equipment was made possible, other techniques were used i.e. photographs, detailed descriptions of incidents that occurred in the research setting as well as sound recordings.

In this study attempts were made to attend as many of the try-out sessions as possible, prior to the cuts being made, to build up descriptions of the try-out environment. It was hoped that these descriptions would yield information which could be used later to stimulate the "insider's" memory. The observations were only carried out on the junior and senior teams at School A. This was for two reasons: firstly, both schools conducted their try-outs at the same time; and secondly, contact was not made with School B until after their try-outs had started.

Despite the lack of consistency in research techniques used at School A and at School B, the observation was maintained for two reasons: firstly, any technique (within ethical limits) that may enhance an understanding of the disengagement process would be worthwhile pursuing; and secondly, the researcher was curious as to whether the use of the stimulated recall technique (albeit rather crude), would help the 'insiders' remember more about the try-out situation.

The observational role adopted at School A was initially a detached one. The position adopted was akin to that of a spectator, sitting on the bleachers or chair at the side of the gym. During the first try-out situation that the researcher was able to attend, she was introduced at the end of the practice to the potential team members. The introduction, by one of the coaches of each team, informed the girls that the researcher was attending the University of Alberta and was doing some research into the try-out process. Following this introduction, the researcher was given time with each team to explain more fully what the research was about and how it could involve them. It was felt that this introduction was necessary, so as to lessen the surprise when the researcher contacted some of them at a later date. It also appeared necessary because the girls were aware that an 'outsider' was watching them, and they wanted to know, "Who's that person?"

During the researcher's explanation of the research project the girls were assured that any conversations that took place between them and the researcher would be held in the strictest confidence. Following the introductions, observation was maintained for a period of three days (during practices), at the end of which, the team was cut. During the following two weeks, constant visits were made to the school mainly to conduct interviews with the subjects, but it also provided an opportunity to watch the team which had been selected play a few games. Of particular interest

to the researcher during the games, were not the games themselves, but whether any of the 'disengaged' were involved, either as spectators or helpers. These observations ended after the last subject from School A had been interviewed.

Depth Interview

The interview technique can be utilized in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes, however the ramifications of including it in research projects should be carefully considered. In their book, *Unobtrusive Measures*, Webb et al. lament the overdependence of social science research on interviews and questionnaires. Their book, therefore, is devoted to outlining other methods which may be used, not to replace interviews and questionnaires, but to supplement and cross-validate them (Webb et al., 1966:2). They make the following comment on interviews and questionnaires:

> Interviews and questionnaires intrude as a foreign element into the social setting they would describe, they create as well as measure attitudes, they elicit atypical roles and responses, they are limited to those who are accessible and will cooperate, and the responses obtained are produced in part by dimensions of individual differences irrelevant to the topic at hand (Webb et al., 1966:1).

The point which Webb et al. are at pains to make is similar to Denzin's: no method is infallible, each has its methodological weaknesses, and to try and counter these inherent weaknesses a combination of methods should be used.

The value of their statement is that it points to the major criticisms made of any reactive style of research, and challenges researchers to take these into account when selecting research techniques.

Different styles of interviewing, have distinctly different limitations, and it is the task of the researcher to weigh up the benefits and drawbacks entailed in each style before adopting it as a technique. Interviews can be defined in terms of their structure: unstructured, when rough guidelines may be followed, but the researcher is equally willing for the interviewee to 'take over' and talk about what is important to him or her; or structured interviews when the interviewee responds to predetermined questions and little flexibility is allowed. The latter method is suitable only for those studies ' in which the interviewer knows what he or she is looking for and when depth in the data is not required. The former method, that chosen for this study, is more suitable when the researcher has no preconceptions as to what the subjects may tell him or her. Other considerations, when selecting an interview technique, relate to the time available to both the researcher and the subject.

Once the coaches had made their team selections, the names of those who failed to make the team were passed onto the researcher. The differing selection processes at School A and B meant that even though contact was made with School B after the senior try-outs had started, nobody was

effectively cut from the teams until the junior try-outs, held during the following week. The selection processes differed in that School A ran the junior and senior try-outs at the same time, but in different gyms (so the girls had to make the choice between trying-out for the juniors or the seniors). School B, due to the small school role, was unable to follow the same procedure, and so they had all the girls try-out at the same time and after the first week, the senior coach would pick his team and the remainder tried out for the junior team. By this procedure, the only people who could be 'cut' after the first week, were those girls who were in Grade 12, as only Grades 10 and 11 could try-out for juniors.

The potential sample consisted of all those girls from School A who were cut from either the junior or the senior team after the first week and those from School B who had failed to make the junior team. The total number of those girls who had tried-out for a school team, but failed to be selected was thirteen: seven of these were from School A and six were from School B. As soon as the names were obtained, the girls were contacted and asked if they would participate in the study. To reduce the inconvenience to the girls, it was proposed that the 'interviews' take place during their free time after school. The physical education staff at both schools made a room available in which the interviews could be conducted.

On contacting the girls, several of them were reluctant to talk. One girl from School A refused to talk about the subject, and although some information was gained during this conversation, no interview ever took place. Another girl from the same school did not want to make time to arrange a meeting, so rather than lose any information that she might have been able to offer, a telephone interview was conducted. Although the advantages and disadvantages of a telephone interview are totally different from those of an interview conducted in the presence of an interviewer, it was thought that it was better to obtain as much information as possible and then determine the validity of the data later. One of the girls was unable to meet in school but she offered the use of her home, so the interview was conducted there. All the remaining interviews with the athletes were conducted at their respective schools. Although all the girls were contacted within one week of their being cut from the team, the school Christmas holidays meant that it was not until four weeks after the final cuts had been made that everybody had been interviewed. The time for each interview ranged from approximately thirty to fifty minutes. The interviews with the coaches, however, lasted approximately fifty minutes to one hour and thirty minutes. These interviews were conducted at times and places most convenient to the coaches. Three of the coaches were interviewed during free time at work, one was interviewed in her own home and the remaining two were interviewed at the

University. As with the girls who had been interviewed, every attempt was made to the make the coach feel at ease. All the interviews, conducted in the presence of the interviewer were recorded on tape. At the beginning of each interview, the subject was asked if they minded the interview being taped: nobody raised any objections.

Analyzing the Data

Introduction

In his editorial introduction to an issue of *Urban Life and Culture* [53] John Lofland identifies two categories which he feels encompass the procedures for doing qualitative field research [54] (Lofland, 1974:307). These categories of social relations (i.e. gaining access to and establishing rapport with those under study) and data collection-analysis (i.e. methods of data collection and procedures for analysis), he feels are unequally represented in sociological literature: the former seeming more 'popular' than the latter. Lofland draws attention not only to the inequality of representation, but also to the quality of representation:

> Instead of appropriate and helpful descriptions of how field workers collect and analyze their data, we get endlessly repetitive accounts of 'my adventures and nausea among the natives' (1974:307).

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[53] This journal has since been renamed: *Urban Life*.
[54] Qualitative research, defined by Lofland employs participant observation and/or intensive interviewing.

Few acquainted with the literature in the area would disagree with Lofland, but perhaps his categorization could be finer and hence his criticism sharper. To class data collection and data analysis together and claim that little of value has been written on them is inaccurate. It is inaccurate, because accounts abound as to how one should collect data (see McCall and Simmons, 1966; Adams and Preiss, 1960; Wax, 1971; Zimmerman and Wieder, 1977; Bogdan and Taylor, 1975). It is, however, accurate to claim that little has been written concerning the analysis of qualitative data. The biggest problem for any novice qualitative researcher must surely be: 'Now that I have all this wealth of meaningful data, what do I do with it? How can I get it into a manageable form?' Only a few sociologists have ventured to include in the reports of their work, descriptions as to how they overcame these problems. [55] In her paper 'The Research Web', Wiseman refers not only to methods of analysis, but also to the final write-up of the report. It is paradoxical that so few qualitative researchers feel the need to explicate what Wolcott calls the 'mystique' of the qualitative process: the writing of the research report. [56]

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[55] Notably: Davis, 1974; Wiseman, 1974; Glaser, 1965; Glaser and Strauss, 1965,1979; Agar, 1980; Turner, 1981.

[56] Here, I have taken the liberty to take Wolcott's (1978) ideas slightly out of context: when referring to the mystique of writing a report, he was in fact referring only to ethnographic studies. However, as ethnography can be considered to be a qualitative research method, this 'writer's licence' seems justified.

Grounded Theory

Of particular value to this study is the work done by Glaser and Strauss (and also Turner, 1981), on the generation of grounded theory. Glaser and Strauss, could perhaps be called the 'founding fathers' of grounded theory, with their early work on the *Awareness of Dying* (1965); *Status Passage*, (1971); and *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (1979). Grounded theory is called such because the theory comes from the data: it is grounded in the real world. This is in contrast to logico-deductive theories which have difficulty in relating to the real world, because they are based on a priori assumptions (Glaser and Strauss, 1979: 93). It is this very fact, that grounded theory develops out of the research process and is not formulated a priori, that is used as a criticism against it. A typical criticism would be that the theory can then be made to fit the data. True, the grounded theory methodologist does look for a 'goodness of fit', but as Glaser and Strauss explain:

> By 'fit' we mean that the categories must be readily (not forcibly) applicable to and indicated by the data under study...(1979:5).

Grounded theory can take two forms: substantive theory (the first stage of grounded theory generation, which is developed for a substantive or empirical area of sociological inquiry, such as coaching or educational systems), and formal theory (the final stage of theory generation), which is developed for a formal or conceptual area of sociological inquiry, such as power and authority or

socialization (Glaser and Strauss, 1979:32). Many research projects, however, never get past the stage of substantive theory and it is only after much refinement of the theory that formal theory emerges. This study aims only at presenting a substantive theory of involuntary disengagement from high school sport.

Another important aspect of grounded theory methodology is what Glaser and Strauss call constant comparative analysis. This type of analysis, whereby comparison groups are studied, is designed to help generate and verify theory:

> The formulation of substantive theory is both facilitated and made additionally credible by the strategy of systematically studying several comparison groups (Glaser and Strauss, 1979:289).

An example of this type of analysis from Glaser and Strauss' work concerns their study on the awareness of dying. They chose several comparative groups from different wards and different hospitals, for example: a cancer, an emergency and intensive care ward were studied in the following types of hospitals: a state hospital, a teaching hospital and a private Catholic hospital. Very few researchers, however, have either the opportunity or the financial backing to study several groups at the same time. In this study the comparative analysis was limited to groups within a group: schools from two different school systems , and junior and senior girls' teams within the interschool athletics structure were studied.

Although Glaser and Strauss provide (in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*) a description of what the methodology is, a clearer and more detailed description of 'how to do it' can be found in Turner, 1981 (see also Glaser and Strauss, 1965 and Glaser, 1965). The method of analysis adopted in this study is based mainly upon Turner's suggestions, with several modifications (see the Addendum for a description of these modifications) to the method of categorizing. Turner expands upon Glaser and Strauss' programmatic guide to the method of discovery of grounded theory.

The following section draws heavily upon Turner's elaboration of the stages of grounded theory suggested by Glaser and Strauss. [57] Nine stages of the research process have been identified: 1. The development of categories related to the data; 2. The saturation of these categories; 3. The construction of a definition of the category; 4. The use of these definitions to promote further theoretical reflection; 5. The development of the categories to yield as much information as possible; 6. The development of linkages between the categories; 7. The further investigation of linkages and relationships between categories; 8. The building of bridges between the emerging relationships and existing theories in the area; 9. The utilization of extreme comparisons to test the strength of emerging theoretical

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[57] It would be advisable for any researcher contemplating using this type of qualitative data analysis, to read Turner's article, before reading Glaser and Strauss (1979)

relationships (Turner, 1981:231).

As mentioned in an earlier section of the study, this work is largely exploratory (due to the paucity of published research in the area), therefore, the analysis of the data only presumes to progress from stages one to eight [58]. The categories which emerged during the analysis are discussed in the following chapter, and the more mechanical details concerning the process of categorization and development (stages one to eight) are discussed in the Addendum.

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[58] Had the study involved another group, as well as high school female athletes, the comparative process would have been more rigorous, and progression to stage nine would have been justified.

V. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Introduction

As suggested in Chapter III, involuntary disengagement (via the selection or try-out process) is just one of the many status passages which can be found in sport: it is also one of the most problematic status passages in sport. Yet despite the often problematic nature of the 'cutting' process, the following observation by Barr, still seems to hold true:

> Coaches from high school to professional levels, seem to share the common opinion that the "art" of cutting players has not been, and never will be a topic of great debate among coaches. Cutting players is a phenomenon which lacks a set of rules. It simply happens, after a selective process of elimination (1980: 15).

This study attempts to investigate how coaches structure the selection process and how the athletes they 'cut' interpret that same process. Of central concern is how the controlling agent (coach) structures the status passage, which is regarded as being involuntary. Is a technique such as 'degradation' or 'cooling-out' used? Also under consideration is how the athletes (or passagees) adjust to the new, "forced" status. It is hoped, that by answering these questions, the first few steps can be taken in developing a substantive theory of involuntary disengagement from high school sport.

Due to the wealth of data gathered, it was decided to structure the discussion in the following way to ensure that relevant data would not be omitted. The discussion follows the career timetable[59] of the coaches and the players of four girl's high school basketball teams in Edmonton.

Although the senior team coaches from each school and the junior team coaches had similar league schedules to adhere to, the try-out career of both the players and coaches in each school were quite different. For this reason the career timetables of the coaches and players at School A shall be presented first followed by a discussion of those at School B. As well as being split into sections according to school and coach or player, the discussion follows the temporal flow of the try-out. To allow comparisons to be made, the careers of both the coaches and the players have been split into the following stages. The preliminary stage describes the period of time before the coach and players first meet. Stage one relates to the first time when the coaches and players meet, which is usually the first day of try-outs. Stage two is concerned with the actual try-out practices which culminate in stage three when the cuts are made and the athletes are informed by the coaches of their status.

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[59] Julius Roth suggests that when many people go through the same series of events, it is called a career and the sequence and timing of these events is a career timetable (1963: 93).

School A

School A, part of the Edmonton Public School System, has a population of 1,556 pupils. [60] This senior high school comprises Grades ten to twelve, with the age of students ranging from thirteen to eighteen years. Although physical education is compulsory in Grade ten, [61] intramural activities are offered at lunch-times, but there is a low response to the three vs. three basketball games compared to the numbers who play volleyball, ice hockey or badminton. There are basically three ways in which the physical education department disseminates information around the school: firstly, news can be announced by the school office over the Public Announcement (P.A.) system; secondly, there is a school information sheet printed daily which all period one teachers read out to their classes; thirdly, there are notices put up on notice boards by the male and female lockers. Generally, however, these notices only last a day or two before they are either defaced or pulled down. There are no athletic awards given to individuals in the school, although students can buy school sweaters. At the main entrance to the school there are trophy cabinets which contain both academic awards and athletic trophies won by school teams.

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[60] Much of this information was gained during informal discussions with the Physical Education Coordinator and other physical education staff. The statistics were gathered in December, 1981.

[61] When compulsory, the students get 80 minutes of physical education for a cummulated total of five months out of the school year.

Senior Team--Coaches

Introduction

Having played and coached together before, the coaches of the senior team at School A shared similar views on how a team should be selected. They had established patterns of actions, which resulted in the senior team try-out being a scheduled and regularized status passage (one of the coaches had followed the same pattern in her four years of coaching at School A).

Preliminary Stage

The season began with the two senior coaches discussing tournaments in which their final team should play. The physical education coordinator [62] had the dates and times of try-outs distributed through the school. The Physical Education Coordinator played the role of the 'go-between' between the students and the coaches, and later when the league games started she organized the table officials for home games.

The schedule or sequence of events which these two coaches followed started as soon as the previous season was over when they began to talk about the upcoming year. They considered who would not be graduating and would therefore be coming back, and which juniors would be moving up. One of the reasons for trying to prejudge what the team would look like, was because the coaches had to 'bid' for certain

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[62] The Physical Education coordinator was the team's teacher-sponsor, because neither of the senior coaches taught at the school.

tournaments.[63]

The coaches were limited as to how many try-out practices they could have, because they had entered the school team in the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation's 'start of the season' tournament.[64] A tentative schedule was established, whereby they could cut the team by the end of the first week, which would give them one week to work with the team.

As in previous years, it was decided to keep twelve players, but although they had thought about who would be returning and what kind of a team they would have, one of the coaches reported that they did not talk about system of play, nor did they have preconceived notions as to who they would keep, with one exception. The exception to the rule, was a girl with good basketball ability, who not only failed to fulfill her potential the previous year, but had also adversely affected other members of the team. If this girl showed the same attitude problem this year, the coaches were going to cut her, despite her ability. Despite the fact that during the previous year the coaches had made comments to

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[63] Invitation to tournaments both inside and outside of the province are sent to the school's athletic association, and all the team's representatives meet prior to the season to put in a 'bid' to go to certain tournaments. If a coach knows he or she will have a strong team then they would feel able to put a bid in for one of the more prestigious tournaments.

[64] Due to School Board regulations, which stipulate that there can be no crossover of team practices, the basketball season could not start until after the volleyball season had ended. This meant that all the coaches who entered teams into this tournament had two school-weeks to prepare a team.

her about her attitude, she was still kept in a closed-awareness situation, insofar as she had not been told that if she continued to exhibit the same behaviour as she had last year, she would be cut. As it transpired, the girl must have come to some realization as to how precarious her position was on the team, because she spoke to the coaches before the try-outs and performed well enough to make the team.

Stage One

Although a status passage is usually scheduled, with times and dates for progression into another stage of the passage (or career timetable), the fact that it can still be uncertain was evidenced by the numbers that tried out. In previous years, approximately twenty girls had tried out for the senior girl's team, but this year only fifteen girls tried out.[65]

Of the two coaches, one was known as 'the talker',[66] and on the first night she introduced herself and the other coach and explained the try-out schedule. It was to take 3 to 4 days to pick a team of 12. She stressed that nobody had a place on the team, because it was generally assumed that

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[65] This number is approximate, because even though there were sometimes 16 or 17 girls trying out, it varied from night to night. The cuts were eventually made from 15 players.

[66] This coach was the one who had had the most coaching experience and she seemed to assume the role of the prime controlling agent of the passage.

'veterans'[67] made the team automatically. Also, the coaches wanted to give the new players the idea that they had a fair chance. The players were also told what the coaches were looking for in their selections: good physical condition; their skills as an athlete and as a basketball player; their potential to fit into and play on a team; and their adaptability as a player. The potential players also had to fill in a sheet giving details such as name, grade, height, where they have played before, and what position they wanted to play.

Stage Two

After the introduction by the coaches of themselves and of their intentions, the actual try-out began. The main selection technique which the coaches used was to set up drills or plays, giving the players as little information as possible in order to see how they coped. Having given the players the minimum information required to perform the drills, the coaches took the opportunity during the first day of practice to stand back and watch the players. The coaches both reported that they talked about the players after each practice, but surprisingly only one reported that after the first practice they had not made any concrete decisions. The other said that on that first day they had, in their minds, already cut the younger players. The second

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[67] The fact that the word 'veteran' was used both by coaches and players, indicates the extent to which the current model of competitiveness (critiqued by Pooley (1979)) has permeated even high school sport.

day of practice involved the players scrimmaging for most of the time. The 'talker' gave the players a basic offence system to play and again they stood back to observe. They watched one or two players more closely than the others, either because they had not seen them play very much, or because the player had had an injury and they were wondering how she would perform.

During the second day, the junior players had begun to play better, so by the third day the coaches began to change their minds. As one of the coaches said:

> Wednesday night was when the crunch started--when we started to realize that the Grade ten kids were very good and we were going to have to make some decision between them and the veterans who had played the year before, but were marginal in terms of their talent and how much potential they had to develop themselves and help the team (15:21).[68]

Initially, the coaches had intended to keep the try-outs as short as possible, hoping that by Thursday they could have made the cuts and started practising, but with the possibility of having to choose between the juniors and the veterans, they decided to extend the try-outs for one more day until Thursday. It is an interesting feature of this type of status passage, that even the controlling agents experience some uncertainty. Being aware of the implications that cutting the veterans would have, the coaches wanted one more day to be sure of their decision. On the Wednesday

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[68] The numbers in parenthesis relate firstly to the number of the interview (assigned randomly), which is followed by the number assigned to the response on the transcribed interview.

evening before the players went home, the coaches told them to come back and try-out again the following day. Another reason that the coaches extended the try-out by one more day was because a junior player, who they knew was fairly good, had been unable to attend a whole practice, and they hoped she would attend the next practice.[69]

On the last day of try-outs, the coaches were looking at those players who had been on the team last year (but were not all that good), and the younger players. Even though the coaches were essentially looking at just the six people in question (three 'veterans' and three juniors), they tried to keep everybody involved in the practice. One of the coaches said:

> You know you're not going to leave them out of the playing so they sit and watch other kids, otherwise it's not fair to ask them to be there--so everything was the same--everyone was included in all the drills... (15:23).

By the end of the last day (after conferring throughout the practice), the coaches had decided to pick the three junior players, in preference to the three veterans. Before the practice finished, the 'talker' called the players together and sat them down, to talk to them.[70] She reiterated that

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[69] The coaches had heard from the physical education coordinator and from some of the players, that this girl wanted to try out.

[70] Since the third day of practice I had been watching the try-outs from the bleachers, making notes of the type of interaction between players and coach, coach to coach, and amongst the players themselves. On the last night of practice, the 'talker' called the players together, she gathered them around her on the opposite side of the gym from where I was sitting. It was as if this was a 'private' talk, to which no 'outsider' should be party.

she wanted players who were committed to the game and would cooperate and work well together as a team. She stressed how difficult it had been to pick the team because she had to look not only to this year, but to the future as well. Having been asked whether this talk was to warn some of the players that they may be upset at the selections, the 'talker' said:

> No, no, the talk was to thank them for coming out to try-outs and everything, and to let them know that I thought they were a talented group of players and it wasn't to cushion the blow to the veterans or anything along those lines. It was simply to talk to them once more about what it was I was doing and what I was working for, so they could think about it. I also indicated to them that my mind had not changed, that no one had made the team when they walked into the first practice and that they should prepare themselves because it had been such a difficult selection (14:25).

She also told them that she and the other coach would help them find a team to play on, if they wanted to.

As the players listened to the 'talker', the other coach stood back and watched the players as they listened. Looking at one of the players that this coach knew they were going to cut, she thought that by the unhappy expression on the girl's face she somehow knew she would be cut.[71] At the end of this talk, the 'talker' told the players that a list would be put up the next morning.[72]

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[71] As it transpired, this girl was the most upset of all of those who were cut.

[72] The coaches were in disagreement as to how they had informed the players of the cuts the previous year and so the 'talker' asked one of the players who had been cut the year before, how they had done it. The girl unlike the coach had not forgotten and said that a list had been put up.

Stage Three

The decision by the coaches to put a list up and to tell the players that they were willing to talk to them the next day before practice was based upon experience from previous years. During the first couple of years that the 'talker' had coached, she made a point of talking to every player during the last try-out practice and told them whether or not they had made the team. If a player had not made the team, they would be told why and what skills they had to improve. She also let them know of other opportunities that were available to them to play basketball. Her reason for no longer using this technique was because she felt the players found it embarrassing, as they would go back into the dressing room and their peers would ask them if they had made the team. The 'talker' was drawing solely from her experience as a coach, as she had never been cut:

> I never knew what it was not to make a team and the different ways you can be cut and how it can affect you when you don't make a team. My experience though, once I had to cut players--I became a bit more aware of how and why there were different methods of telling people, and although I thought the first [talking to each player] was good, its basic flaw was it embarrassed some people (14:19).

The list was posted once all the girls had left the school, so that they would all have to wait until the morning to see who had made it.[73] The next day two of the

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[73] The coaches had told two girls on the last night that they had made the team, because they did not want them to be unduly worried.

four girls who had been cut, had turned up before practice to talk to the coaches, but the 'talker' was late and they wanted to talk to her. As the 'talker' walked in she recalled one of the players telling her, with great concern, that two of the veterans who had been cut were waiting to talk to her. The physical education coordinator had also told the coaches that one of these two was very upset and had been crying all day and had gone home, but had returned especially to talk to the 'talker'.

Although both of the players had taken it very personally, one of them seemed to be more apologetic than anything else. To this girl, the 'talker' said she felt she was being too hard upon herself. When asked about playing basketball elsewhere, this girl said she would rather try to get onto a volleyball or waterpolo team. As she was so upset, the 'talker' asked her if she wanted to think about it and come back and see her later, to talk some more, but the girl seemed to have made her mind up and said that she would not.[74]

The other veteran, who had returned to see the coaches, was more upset than the other girl, so much so that the 'talker' said:

> I don't think I've ever been involved with anyone where I've cut them, that has been so upset about not making the team, and so angry with not making the team (14:33).

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[74] The 'talker' said she had met the girl a month later on the bus, and no reference was made to the try-out or basketball, they talked about sport in general.

Researcher--"Angry at herself, or at you?"

> Angry at me I think and angry at the situation, because I don't think she accepted the concept that there could be veterans in high school and rookies in high school, and I think that's probably valid. I don't know if the kid at 17 should consider themselves washed up because a younger kid made it and unfortunately I think that stuck in her brain and she was unwilling to see it any other way
>
> (14:34).

This player had been the most difficult one for the coaches to cut, because although she was good enough to be the 11th. or 12th. player they did not think she had the capacity to sit on the bench, and there was a younger girl who was better at her position, so they decided to cut her. It was also difficult because the 'talker' had coached her elder sister and had come to know the rest of the family who were dedicated basketball fans. Ironically, had the coach used techniques associated with degradation (for example distancing herself from the player), previous contact with the family may not have been regarded as being problematic. In trying to help this girl come to terms with her new identity (as a non-player), the coach tried to explain why they had 'cut' her, but she felt the girl was too emotionally upset for any of these reasons to make sense.

The third veteran who was cut, did not even go back to talk with either coach, and neither of them was surprised at this. They felt that this girl would take her time to think things over, and then if anything bothered her she would go back and talk to them. The fact that this girl did not

appear to talk to them, was interpreted by the coaches as meaning that she fully understood why she had been cut. This could also have been interpreted as meaning that the girl wanted to dissociate herself from the coaches and team out of anger. Ball would interpret such dissociation as a personal reaction to failure, whereby the 'failure' tries to increase the role distance between themselves and the 'controller' (in this case, the coach). It was not interpreted in this manner, however, because both the coaches had established a good rapport with the girl last year, and did not expect there would be any resentment or bitterness. The coaches also cut another Grade twelve girl, who had just transferred from another school. The decision to cut this girl was not as problematic, as that concerning the 'veterans'.

Senior Team -- Players

Introduction

Having presented an analysis of how the coaches structured the try-out, the focus now moves to how the players, that these coaches cut, interpreted the same try-out process. The four players who were cut from the senior team, were all in Grade Twelve, and 17 years old. All but one had played on the team the year before. Two of the girls agreed to meet and talk to the researcher, although the one who, according to the coaches was the most upset, refused to meet. During a telephone conversation to try to persuade this girl to meet and talk, some information was

gained about her reactions and future plans. The one girl who had not played on the team before was unwilling to meet and talk to the researcher, but she consented to a telephone interview. [75] The data presented in this section is therefore largely based upon information from only three of the four girls cut from the senior team.

Preliminary Stage

Having played the year before, three of the girls knew approximately when the try-outs would begin (immediately after the volleyball season finished). As the try-outs drew nearer, however, they learned (as did the newcomer to the school) of the exact starting date and times from the physical education staff or from notices in the gymnasium. Neither of the three girls interviewed had played organized basketball since the previous season. One of them said that she thought some of the other players had privately arranged with the coaches, to go and work out at another location. If this was the case, it may indicate that there was a closed-awareness state even within the group of returning players. [76]One of the girls had managed to work out in her father's school, but the other two had not done any type of pre-season training specifically for basketball.

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[75] Although, the researcher felt that personal contact with the players was important, the telephone interview was conducted so that at least some information could be gained.
[76] No other information relating to this private arrangement was recorded.

Stage One and Two

On the first day of the try-outs, the coaches said they were looking for a team that would work well together, and they repeated this throughout the four days of practising. When asked if she found that type of information helpful or not, one of the girls responded:

> I think it has to help you--I think if they tell you-we're looking for people who will work as a team--as soon as you do any play or anything--you're automatically going to start thinking to yourself well--you know, we have to remember to do this--not just concentrate on an individual skill so much. It changes a little bit the way that you are going to do it (6:38).

Two of the interviewed players had been unsure about whether to try out again: one, because she had not enjoyed it very much the previous year, and the other because she had given up piano the year before to play, and did not know whether to do the same this year. The first player felt pressured into it because she felt the Physical Education coordinator was annoyed at her for considering not trying-out and the other returning players thought she should. The second girl, like the first, talked about it with other players and eventually decided to try-out because she thought she would not have the opportunity to do so in the future.

The try-out was perceived as being very tense, due to 16 players competing for 12 places on the team.[77] At different times during the try-outs, all three players

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[77] The previous year the final cuts were made from a pool of about 20 players.

sensed that they might not make the team. For one of them this realization came during the last two days of the try-outs when the coach was switching players in and out of the games, and she was not switched in and therefore did not play. By comparing her skill level to that of other girls competing for her position, the other girls felt that others were better than them. On the third night of the try-outs, the coach called the players over and told them that it was a very difficult decision that year and so the try-outs would be extended by one more day. When recalling this talk, one of the girls commented:

> ...yes, all coaches go through that speech-that "it's not because you can't play basketball, it's just that you don't have the right things that I want for the team"...it always feels that it doesn't matter, you're still not on the team, and that's all you went out for. She was just saying something about picking a team that could play together... It doesn't make any difference--you weren't on that team and that's all that you really wanted (1:59).

Stage Three

When the list was posted on the fifth day after the try-outs began, one of the girls went to look at it first thing in the morning. Also looking at the notice at this time were most of the other Grade 12's who had tried-out, but unlike her, had made the team. Despite the fact that, as she put it, "they were pretty good about it" (1:67), she went home for the day because she did not want to face anybody else. 'Saving face' by withdrawing oneself from a threatening environment is a short-term measure which can reduce the possibility of embarrassment and at the same time

safeguard one's identity.

The other girl however, did not go and look at the list first thing in the morning because the previous year they had all done that and the list went up about an hour late. This year she went in between classes, and was the only one at the notice, although the other veteran who was cut (but did not want to be part of the study) appeared just as she was leaving. Having looked at the list she knew that the other veteran who had come to look at the notice, as she was leaving, had not made the team. Not knowing what kind of reaction to expect, she said nothing to this girl, although she heard later that she was very upset. In terms of identity maintenance, this girl knew that the other's identity had been threatened, and as a result did not force interaction, which may have resulted in either one, or both of them becoming embarrassed. The third girl was not too upset, because she had already suspected that she would not make the team.

Despite the fact that both of the girls interviewed had failed to meet the requirements set by the coach to make the team, neither of them saw themselves as being 'a failure'. Although they acknowledged that they had failed to make the team, the fact they had success in other aspects of their lives (i.e., volleyball, music and debating), prevented them from identifying with the word 'failure'. Although one of the girls did experience a temporary set back because she really wanted to play basketball. She said:

> It doesn't really bother me--people can say 'Well you got cut'--most of the people that have talked to me haven't made it any way seem that I was in any way a failure. Most of them have--they know I can play volleyball and soccer, so if I can't play basketball there is maybe somebody else that maybe doesn't play volleyball that can play basketball
>
> (1:85).

Two of the girls were interested in watching the team play, neither had had time to do so because after the cuts, one returned to a job she had and the other, found one. With regard to playing basketball, one girl would have been interested in playing community league basketball, but her community did not have a team. The other girl was going to try and get onto a volleyball club team in a city league, and did not anticipate playing anymore basketball.[78] The 'newcomer' to the school managed to get onto a basketball team which played in the City Ladies' League. She felt that playing for this team was more enjoyable, than playing on a school team could have been. Both the players interviewed, were glad that the coach had let them know the criteria by which they were being selected. Based on these criteria, however, two of the players felt that the other veteran should have made the team, especially as a junior-age player made the team after attending only one practice. After the cuts were made, two of the three veterans cut, went to talk to the coach, after the first team practice.[79]

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[78] The other veteran who had been cut, did say, very defiantly, that she would continue to play basketball.
[79] The other player felt that the coach's decision had been a fair one, and that she herself would probably have made the same decision, so she did not feel any need to speak to the coach. If she had gone to talk to the coaches, she

[79] The one that had been interviewed reported that she felt no better after having talked to the coach; partly because the coach had told her that she knew she was going to cut her by Tuesday. The other veteran (who would not meet with the researcher) said that she did not think the coach's reasons were good enough and she had talked to some of her friends and they did not think they were good enough either. [80]

None of the girls interviewed experienced any difficulties when talking to either those who made the team, or those who asked them how they had got on. Despite disagreeing with the coaches' decisions, there was no resentment between those who made it and those who were cut. One girl felt that:

> I think it's what you make of it, as long as I don't make it as if they are the villains and just keep the same friendship up as I had before and ask them how they did...because I am still interested (1:94).

Another girl felt that there was almost a guilt reaction when she spoke to those who made it, because after the CAHPER tournament, players were telling her that it was too bad she was cut, and that they could have done with her.

Summary

The coaches of this team consciously rejected a method of cutting players which was essentially private (talking to

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[79](cont'd)thought they would have been quite straight forward in telling her why she had not made the team.
[80] Ironically, this girl was the only one to have watched any of the games the team had played. After having watched some of the games she thought that the team was suffering because she was not playing on it.

each person individually), in favour of one which was more public (posting a list). Their reasons for doing this were based upon past experience which led them to believe that the players were more embarrassed by having to return to the dressing-room and confront the inquiries of their peers as to whether they had made the team or not, than facing their peers whilst crowding round the board to see the list of players. Appreciating the value of talking to players about why they have been cut, the coaches tried to get the 'best of both worlds' by posting a list, and telling players they were welcome to talk to them, if they did not know why they had been cut. As a result of this year's experiences, the coaches would, in the future, like to post a list and then arrange to meet one week later to talk over the decision with the player. By doing this, the coaches would hope to avoid the situation they experienced this year, when the players still seemed too shocked by the failure to comprehend the reasons for being cut.

The nature of the status passage which the coaches structured, was more of an open-awareness environment than a closed one. This semi-open awareness meant that the coaches did inform the players of some of the criteria on which they were to be selected, but did not tell them when they were in danger of being cut. When one of the girls, on talking to the coach after the cuts, discovered that the coach knew on Tuesday she was not going to make the team, wished the coach has told her then. The fact that she had not been told

anything, led her to raise her hopes by the end of the week, only to be sadly disappointed. By not being told of the possibility of her being cut, the girl was deprived of the opportunity to try and reverse the undesirable status passage (from potential player to non-player). The semi-open awareness context can create problems; for example, some of the players assumed (because they had not been told otherwise) that attendance at practices was a prerequisite for making the team, so when a girl made the team after attending only one practice, several of the others were surprised. The semi-open awareness context can also be viewed as being semi-closed, and as such it represents a lack of control which the players have over the selection process. The ability of the players, in this situation, to negotiate their 'fate' was extremely limited. The only negotiation evident in this passage came when the 'cooler' (the coach) practised the art of consolation, when discussing with the players, why they were cut.

For the players cut from the senior team at School A, it appears that although the coaches were concerned about the implication of various 'cutting techniques', the resultant process contains both elements of 'degradation ceremonies' and 'cooling out'. The elements of degradation ceremonies which were present were firstly, that the notification of who had (and by virtue of that, who had not) made the team was public; secondly, the unsuccessful players were forced out of the environment: they were no longer

welcome to appear at any of the practices. The elements of 'cooling-out' which were present included, the attempts by the coach to help the players accept the 'failure', and the help they offered them to find a team to play on, was designed to help them re-define their 'spoiled identities'.

One of the coaches reasons for posting a list was to reduce the embarrassment (one of the personal reactions to failure) experienced by players when they first found out that they had not made the team. Putting up a list however, did not seem to reduce the embarrassment experienced by these girls when told directly, it only resulted in a different kind of embarrassment.

Junior Team -- Coaches

Introduction

Both the junior coaches graduated from school A, and had kept in touch with the school through the Physical Education coordinator. They started coaching junior basketball at school A together in the 1980-81 season, at the suggestion of the Physical Education coordinator, and had continued to do the same during the 1981-82 season. Their decision to coach together was largely due to the fact that although they were both keen to coach, each had other commitments which would have made it impossible for them to coach on their own.

Preliminary Stage

From having coached the same team the year before,[81] the coaches knew the form the try-outs were going to take and so there was little preparation done before the try-outs began. As their plans were based upon the previous year, they were expecting to have thirty to forty players trying-out, in which case they would have cut some of these players on the first night. The junior and senior team try-outs ran concurrently, so when notices were posted and announcements made about the senior try-outs, similar notice was made of the junior try-outs. As this was the case, the coaches were unable to predict who would try-out because junior-age players could try-out for the seniors too, and only if they did not make the seniors was there a possibility of them trying out for the junior team. There was also no official communication between the teachers and coaches at the junior high schools and those at the senior high schools, so the junior team coaches could not predict what kind of team they would have. This type of structured uncertainty, where a tentative try-out timetable had been established, but there was no guarantee it would be adhered to, meant that the coaches did not have full control over the passage. All the coaches could say, was that the try-outs would probably last one week.

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[81] The junior team had been very successful the previous year and had won the Junior League City Championships.

Stage One

The lack of control which the coaches as controlling agents had over the status passage was demonstrated at the first try-out, when only thirteen girls showed up. Usually, the tactic employed by the coaches on the first night of the try-outs was to push the girls hard in drills, to see who could work hard. The coaches would also talk about the type of commitment the girls would have to make if they wanted to play on the team, and how much time it would take up. However, when only thirteen showed up the coaches decided not to 'scare' the girls off in any way and so very little was said to the girls in terms of what the coaches were looking for in a team. The players were requested to fill in a form giving their name, grade and what basketball experience they had. [82]

Stage Two

Due to the lack of numbers the first night, instead of running drills to try and 'weed' players out, the coaches ran drills to assess the general skill level and to identify the players with the most potential. At the end of the first night, one of the coaches (who had also coached the junior volleyball team at the same school) approached some of the girls who were trying-out that she knew from volleyball and asked them to see if any of their friends wanted to come and try-out. The following night about seventeen girls appeared,

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[82] The coaches forgot to ask which position the girls wanted to try-out for. This was not discovered until later.

but the numbers dropped back down again on the third night. The skill level was quite low, so instead of using a tactic similar to one used by the senior coaches (of giving the minimum information necessary to perform a task and watching how well they adapt to it), the coaches ended up teaching the skills and watching how quickly the players could pick them up.

By the second night of the try-outs the coaches had adjusted their thinking to the smaller numbers and the drills were designed to push them a bit harder. One of the coaches felt that the players had to have at least two or three if not four try-outs, before any cuts were made so that inconsistent players were not chosen over consistent ones. This coach also felt that giving them the three or four nights before any cuts were made was enough time for them either to have settled down or weeded themselves out. The coaches evaluation, therefore, is made from the remaining players after the numbers attending have become steady. The players were selected upon their athletic ability, their basketball ability and how good they were at picking up skills and plays.

The girls kept on asking the coaches how many players they were keeping, but the coaches were unable to give a concrete answer. On the second last night, the coaches shared their uncertainty by telling the players that they did not know exactly what they were going to do; it was a totally new situation for them, one night there would be

eleven girls and the next there would be thirteen.

Stage Three

Having watched the players for three or four nights, the coaches sat down and discussed how many players they were going to keep. In high school athletics the normal procedure was to keep as many players as was possible, but one of the coaches was reluctant to keep twelve players for the sake of keeping the maximum. She could not see the value in keeping players who did not have the potential to develop into good basketball players, so the decision was made to keep ten players. The players were also told on the second last night of practice that although the coaches did not like posting a list with the names of those who had made it, they did not have time to do anything else. The coaches explained that in previous years they had walked round during the last practice, telling everybody individually whether they had made the team or not. They did not have enough time to do that this year, because the season's schedule had been brought forward and that left them with only one week of practice.

At the last practice the players were told that the list would go up late that night and they would be able to see it the next day. The coaches had meant to tell the players that if their name was not up on the board they were welcome to go and talk to them, but they forgot to do that. By doing that, the coaches inadvertently kept the players in a closed-awareness context. Although both coaches felt that

it would have been good to talk to each of the players they cut, they thought that at the junior level it did not really matter because most of them did not know any different. One of the coaches said that she did not know how dedicated any of the juniors were: how much basketball was part of their lives and whether it mattered to them whether the coach came and talked to them. She did not think it would have been a traumatic experience for them to be cut, although she thought that it might have been different for the seniors who had maybe played for the school for two years. Although the coaches seemed to acknowledge that by the very nature of the passage it was undesirable they were not sure as to the centrality of the passage for the passagees. By suggesting that the passage would be more undesirable for the seniors because they had had more involvement, suggests that the greater the degree of centrality (how important basketball is to the individual's life), the more undesirable the passage of potential player to non-player would be.

On reviewing the technique used for informing the players of their status, both the coaches said that they found it easier to post a list because they did not have to face the immediate reaction of the player. By posting the list and telling the players they could talk about it later with them, the coaches hoped that the players would have 'got themselves together'. The coaches also felt that the extra time would also give themselves time to prepare what they were going to tell the players. These comments from the

coaches brought to light a characteristic of status passages not mentioned by Glaser and Strauss: that of the degree of contact between the controlling agent and the passagee. The coaches of the junior team preferred to maintain their distance from the passagee, at least until they felt that the passagee had had time to come to terms with her new status, and hence her new identity. A high degree of contact between the controlling agent and passagee is one of the main features of the 'cooling-out' process, when the cooler helps the passagee to reconstruct and accept a new identity which is in accord with the passagee's new environment. The fact that these coaches wanted to minimize their contact with the players, suggests that the method of involuntary disengagement used was not of a 'cooling-out' nature. That the type of involuntary disengagement used by these coaches is not similar to that of 'cooling-out' the passagee or the athlete, does not automatically mean that it is therefore a type of 'degradation' ceremony: the two are not mutually exclusive. Instead it would be more realistic to view the two as being at opposite ends of a continuum, with varying degrees of 'cooling-out' and 'degradation' in between.

Players

Introduction

Due to the coaches' decision to keep only ten players, three girls were cut from the junior team. Two of these girls were in Grade ten (15 years old) and the other was in Grade eleven (16 years old). One of the Grade ten girls and

the Grade eleven girl had played basketball since Grade four in community leagues, but the other Grade ten girl had only played since Grade eight. Two of the girls had played on the senior team at their respective junior high schools (and the other had played community league basketball), but this was the first time they had tried out for a team at School A. The Grade eleven girl did not try-out for the basketball team whilst in Grade ten because she was too heavily involved in music: this year she wanted a change, and therefore decided to try-out for the junior basketball team. Although music and basketball seemed to be central to this girl's life, the degree of centrality seemed to be quite variable: shifting from year to year.

Preliminary Stage

Prior to the try-out, none of the girls had done anything to prepare themselves especially for it. In fact, one of the girls said that she had only decided to try out three or four hours beforehand. [83] Each player heard about the try-outs from a different source: one heard from her sister (who was also trying out for the junior team); and the other, as previously mentioned, was told by her friend. The latter girl said that she had heard nothing officially, but that it was all 'hearsay'.

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[83] This girl showed up to the second try-out after one of her friends had gone to the first try-out and come back saying that the coaches wanted more people to go and try out. She had also missed not playing basketball in Grade 10.

Stage One and Stage Two

At the first practice the players were told that if they wanted to try-out they should fill in one of the forms supplied, giving details of their basketball experience. This opportunity to inform the coaches of their experience, gave the players (passagees) some sense of individuality. So instead of being treated as a collective (a group passing through the same status passage at the same time) the players could be thought of as individuals within a collective group, with different experiences to offer to the team. The remainder of the first day of practice was spent doing conditioning and basketball drills. Before the practice finished that day, the coaches asked the girls to see if anybody else wanted to try out, and if so, they were to go along the next day. Having only had thirteen girls the first night, the numbers jumped to seventeen the second night, although they fell back down to thirteen by the third night. When the coaches asked the girls to see if anybody else wanted to try-out, one of the players thought this was because the coaches wanted somebody to play, who had not already come to the try-outs. One of the players noticed that the coaches had not asked what positions they played, but she did not say anything because she thought that the coaches had asked the rest of the players what their positions were, when she was not there. This lack of questioning by the players of the coaches actions (or non-actions) seems to reinforce the idea that the coaches

have hidden control over the players. This control, however, may be of different types: firstly, it could be related to the power relationship of the controlling agent and passagee; secondly, it could be because the coach holds a similar position in the school as does a teacher, and students tend to follow an implicit rule which states that they should not question a teacher's actions or knowledge; or thirdly, the extent of control may be a function of age: that the players should not question their elders. That age could have been the inhibitory factor seems doubtful, as the coaches were only, at the most, six years older than the players. It seems more likely that this reluctance on the part of passagees to question the controlling agents is a combination of the power relationship which exists and the identification of the coaches' roles with the familiar role of the teacher.

None of the players had any recollection of the coaches outlining either their expectations they had of the players or their criteria for selection of the team. One of the girls assumed that, because she had not heard anything about the coaches' expectations or criteria for selection, she had missed what she called the coaches' "tough-team this year", 'pep' talk. She had expected this talk during the first try-out when the coaches usually tell the players how hard the try-outs and season will be. Such comments indicate just how scheduled and regularized the selection process is: passagees expect to hear a 'pep' talk at the beginning of

the try-outs. A comment from one of the senior players who was cut (quoted on page 86), indicates that the 'pre-cut' talk is also regularized to the extent that it may lose some of its meaning.

Stage Three

The junior team practised for four nights, and on the last night the coaches called the players around and told them that the list would be going up that night and if any of the girls wanted to talk to them individually, they could.[84] The next day one of the girls was told by her sister (who had made the team) that she had been cut; another, suspected she had not made it and asked a friend, who told her she had not made it. Later, after school, she went down to look at the list herself. Claiming she did not have time, the third girl to be cut did not look at the list until lunch-time. The last two girls mentioned did not express much surprise at being cut, because during the practices they had compared their skill level to those of the other players and felt that their skills were not as good as those who made it. The other girl was surprised, and disappointed that she had not made it and felt that she was just as good as some of those who had made the team. This conclusion was formulated by watching the others play and was also based upon what she knew of their experience. She and one of the others who had been cut expressed their

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[84] The coaches had also told the players that they did not like to put up a list--but they did not have time to talk to everybody.

surprise that one girl who did not even know where to stand on the basketball court was selected.[85] These two girls also found it surprising that some people made the team without having gone to every practice. As with the senior team, the players had, because the coaches had not told them otherwise, incorrectly assumed that attendance at try-out practices was mandatory.

That the girls who were cut from the team were surprised that people were selected despite their poor attendance at practices, or their seeming lack of basketball experience, reflects a breakdown in communication between the coaches and the players. A breakdown in communication can, and in this case did, result in a lack of awareness on the part of the passagees, of the criteria for selection devised by the controlling agents. Had the players been made aware that attendance or non-attendance at try-out practices would not necessarily affect their chances of selection, they might have better understood why certain people made or did not make the team. Similarly, had the players been made aware that an individual's perceived potential for playing basketball counted just as much as their existing level of ability, the selection of a complete novice might have been better understood.

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[85] During the try-out practices, the players did not play in any scrimmages, it was only during the first team practice that they scrimmaged and that the rest of the players realised that this girl had never played basketball before.

Although the coaches had invited players to go and talk to them if they wished, none did. Two of the players cut assumed that their level of ability was not good enough and therefore they saw no need to go and talk to the coaches. The 'significant others' (players, friends and family) of the other girl, however, all supported her in thinking that she should have made the team. During the interview, it transpired that the girl's 'significant others' had in fact watched her play, and to that extent they were well informed of her capabilities. The extent to which their judgement that she should have made the team, however, was limited, as her sister was the only one of the 'significant others' to have full knowledge of the try-out situation. Despite this conflict between what her 'significant others' were telling her and what she assumed was the reason for her being cut, this girl still did not go and talk to the coaches.

Both the Grade 10 girls were fairly sure that they would try out again for the same team the next year.[86] The Grade 11 girl however, would only be eligible for the senior team the following year, and was not sure whether she would try out again. Generally, all the players felt they had tried their best, but it just was not good enough. This comment by the Grade 11 girl sums up the reaction of them all:

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[86] The fact that these girls were going to try out the following year would suggest that it would have been useful for them to have spoken to the coaches to know their reasons for being cut from the team.

> ...let's face it, you can never have something like that, get cut, and be happy about it totally, so I was disappointed (3:52).

In Chapter IV the assertion was made that involuntary disengagement was necessarily undesirable; the following comment by one of the girls puts this assertion into question:

> I think I need some, you could call them failures, to keep myself in line (3:69).

When talking about the use of a list for informing players of their status, the players supported the coaches belief that they did not mind, because they did not know any other ways of informing players. It seems that the players were in a closed-awareness context due to their lack of experience. One wonders whether their opinions of the technique used would have been different if they had had more experience of try-outs.

Summary

The coaches of this team decided, due to lack of time, to inform players of their status by posting a list after the last day of try-outs. Before posting the list, the coaches told the players that this was not the way they normally informed players, but this year they did not have enough time to talk to each of the players individually. As the coaches had correctly assumed, this lack of contact between the controlling agent and the passagees did not seem to bother the players unduly. What did seem to cause a problem was the closed-awareness context, within which the players found themselves: not knowing exactly what criteria

were being used for selection. The process or status passage was not so highly controlled that the players could not approach the coaches and ask them questions, but for some reason they did not. There could be several reasons, and these fall into two categories: personal or structural. Personal reasons for not questioning the coach include such things as being a shy individual or being intimidated or frightened by the coach. Structural reasons refer to how the coach structured the selection process, for instance, the coach may have established a high degree of role distance between coach and player, which combined with a power relationship, would lead to the coach being perceived as operating in an unapproachable position.

As with the senior team, the coaches provided no opportunities for the cut players to still be involved with the team, either as an extra player in practice, or as one of the table officials or team manager. In this sense, the selection process did contain elements of 'degradation ceremonies' (the individual was forced out of the social organization), but the controlling agents did offer to talk to the passagees to help them re-define their identities (which is a central process in 'cooling-out'). The selection process, therefore, contained elements of both 'degradation ceremonies' and of 'cooling-out' processes.

School B

School B, part of the Edmonton Catholic School System, was a fairly small senior high school with an approximate

population of 440 students. As with School A, physical education was compulsory in Grade 10, but optional in Grades 11 and 12. Intramural activities, organized by the physical education department, were also offered at lunch times, but these were limited because the school only had one gymnasium. Information of Physical Education related activities was disseminated by the Physical Education department over the public announcement (P.A.) system or by notices put on the board in the gymnasium. Due to such a small school role, there were only two physical education teachers, one male and one female, and between them they had to cover as many of the Physical Education activities as they could. As with some other schools in Edmonton (i.e., School A), coaches often had to be brought in from outside to ensure that each school team had a coach.

Junior and Senior Team -- Coaches

Introduction

Due to the shortage of coaches within the school, the girl's senior team was coached by an 'outsider', who when he started coaching at School B in 1976, was the first male to coach a girl's team in the Edmonton Catholic School System. The junior team was coached by the female Physical Education teacher who had only started teaching at School B that year. Having coached the same team at one school for five years, the senior coach had a well established, regularized schedule which was followed every year. Due to the school only having an enrollment of approximately 400 students, and

the fact that there was only one gymnasium, the try-outs for the senior and junior girl's teams were held together. Any players interested in playing for the school were expected to attend the senior try-outs. During these try-outs, the senior coach would pick his team and leave the junior coach to pick (from who was left) who she wanted for the junior team. As the try-outs were continuous, the selection process used shall be discussed with reference to both teams.[87]

Preliminary Stage

As with the Public School System, the Edmonton Catholic School System has a rule which prevents try-outs for one sport being run before the previous season had finished. This rule meant that the basketball try-outs could not begin until after the volleyball season had finished. The senior coach found this rule non-sensical because although it was supposedly designed to protect the students, from too heavy an involvement in sport, he felt that they were the ones who wanted that amount of involvement and cross-over. To overcome this problem of not being able to hold official try-outs until the volleyball season was over, the senior coach scheduled practices before school in the mornings. These morning practices were open to anyone who was interested in playing basketball for the school.

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[87] This is in contrast to the first section of the discussion where, because the selection process varied slightly, the teams were discussed separately.

Stage one

As soon as the volleyball season was over the senior coach held a team meeting to which any player interested in trying out for the senior or junior team was invited to attend. Information about this meeting was disseminated via the P. A. system; by notices in the gymnasium and by the physical education staff. At this meeting everybody wanting to try out had to fill in a form giving details of their basketball experience. The players also had to write down why they wanted to try out for either the junior or senior team. At the team meeting the senior coach went over team rules, such as no excuses for showing up late or for missing practice. The Grade 11s were also told that if there was a Grade 10 who was as good as they were, the Grade 10 would make the senior team. In support of this practice the senior coach said that:

> It's not a right to play basketball, it's a privilege. You've got something to give to the school and if someone in Grade 10 has three years to give to the school and you have only two, in a way it's being selfish (17:13).

Also during this meeting he set out his coaching philosophy which he reinforced by handing out a small booklet containing team rules, quotations and poems. On the front cover of this booklet was a cartoon of what he has called a "School B Muffie". (He has also had this cartoon printed on practice jerseys for the team). The following excerpts from this booklet illustrate the coach's philosophy:

Are you willing to sacrifice?

From an unacknowledged source:

> "Remember this your lifetime through: tomorrow, there'll be more to do...and failure waits for all who stay with some success made yesterday... tommorrow, you must try once more and even harder than before."

From "Precepts for a Successful Athlete":

> "To be a successful athlete, is to be at one with God. This is so, for it is God who provides the clay, leaving you to do the moulding. It should be your wish to return to he who made you, twice the talents with which he blessed you, as did his servant in the parable. (Matthews, 25, 14-30) To do less brings shame on your school, shame on your coach, shame on your parents and shame on youself. Determine to succeed, practice with all your might, never forgetting the shame of failure."

The booklet concludes with Coach John R. Wooden's 'Pyramid of Success', in which success is defined as being the result of self-satisfaction in knowing that you did your best, to become the best that you are capable of becoming.[88]

Having outlined his philosophy, the senior coach continued to describe the selection procedures to be used in both the senior and junior try-outs. (The senior coach, considered the junior team as a building team for his senior team, and therefore he also kept close control over who was selected for the junior team.) He described the skill stations that the players would have to go through and told them that the list of who was to return for senior practices would be posted the following day. All those who were in

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[88] A copy of this booklet was supplied by the junior team coach, the senior coach had made no mention of the booklet, although he did say that they went over the team rules at the meeting.

Grade 10 and 11 and had not made the senior team were invited to attend the junior practices. This meant that if Grade 10s and 11s were cut from the senior team they still had another chance to make a school team (the juniors). In this sense, the selection process contained one of the characteristics of 'cooling-out' whereby an alternative (but lower) status is offered to the passagee. However, had any Grade 12 tried out for the senior team, and been cut, they would have been offered no such alternative status, and therefore the selection process also contained elements of 'degradation ceremonies'.

Stage Two

During the selections for the senior team, the coach took the following things into consideration; firstly, he looked at who would be returning, then he decided which type of offence he would run and then he slotted the returning players into the various positions. At that point in the season, most of the returning players had made the team. When looking at the new players trying out he looked for people who who he thought were intelligent; who could run and jump; and those who had a high desire to play. By giving players a 'killer' drill [89] the coach tested the attitudes of the players. The attitude of the player was regarded as being acceptable if they did not complain and if they

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[89] This type of drill is designed to make the players work extremely hard. The perseverance of the players, often against unsurmountable odds is taken to be an indication of their willingness to work hard.

recognized the coach's authority. No matter how gifted a player may have been, if their attitude was not acceptable, they would not make the team.

The main selection 'tool' required the players to move round a number of skill stations designed to test strength, speed, endurance and the ability to shoot baskets from different positions. A score for each player was recorded at each station and the total scores are rank ordered. This score for each player was used as a basis for the comparison of one individual with another. Based upon these scores and what the player's overall attitude was perceived to be, the team was selected. From a starting figure of twenty-six to twenty-eight, ten players were retained. The players had been told that the next day a list would be posted of those being invited back to senior practices. Those whose names were not on the list were thanked for trying out and invited to try out (if they were still in grade 10 or 11) for the junior team.

The junior team coach had worked with the senior team coach during the try-outs so both had had a chance to look at some of the potential junior players. Twelve girls were left from senior try-outs, but the junior coach felt that she would be unable to work with five of them due to a personality clash. As the junior team was regarded by the senior coach as a building team, there were some players who the senior coach wanted on the junior team, so the junior coach had to abide by his decision. With only twelve players

trying out, five of whom the junior coach did not want to work with, she invited girls from her physical education classes (whom she knew she could work with), to try out. The junior coach ran three extra days of try-outs, as well as the first one from which the seniors were picked. At first she ran the try-outs in the same way as the senior coach had done, but she realized that their ways of running try-outs differed, so she ended up giving the girls drills and scrimmages. Not only did the junior coach change the nature of the passage from being highly controlled to being more flexible, she also lengthened the passage from one day to three days.

Stage Three

By the second day of the junior try-outs there were seventeen players, and this was cut to ten players by the next day. In exactly the same manner as the seniors, a list was posted giving the names of those players who were invited to attend practices. Two of the eight girls cut, went to see the coach to find out why they had been cut. (These girls had played the year before under another coach.) The coach told them that it was their attitude in their physical education class for which they were being cut and not so much for their basketball skill. The girls told the coach that their attitude changed after three p.m. because it was something they wanted to do. Although the coach did not agree with them, she gave them another chance and let them both return to practice the next day. After the

extra day, the coach kept one and cut the other again. That the coach gave the players another chance indicates that there was some degree of flexibility in the status passage. The status passage was also repeatable, as one of the players found out (because she was 'cut' twice).

The coach decided to post a list telling the players who was to return to the team practices, because when she had coached the junior volleyball team that was what the senior coach suggested she do. When she had told him that she though that was a bit cold (impersonal), he told her that was what had to be done. On the list, she thanked all the girls for trying out, but nothing was written about them talking to her if they wanted to find out why they had been cut. Due to her inexperience at coaching, the coach felt that this year she had just been learning how things were done, but next year she anticipated doing things more her own way.

Although the method of informing the passagees was impersonal (e.g. there was little contact between controlling agent and passagee), there was some contact with the players. After the try-outs the coach asked one of the girls she had cut if she would like to be team manager. The position would enable this girl to continue practising with the team, learning more as she went along, and at the same time as fulfilling managerial duties. The provision of an alternate status to an individual who has been involuntarily disengaged is one of the archetypal characteristics of the

'cooling-out' process. The senior coach claimed that similar opportunities were open to players cut from the senior team, i.e., Grade 12s, but he felt that if their desire to play had been high enough the girls would have found it difficult to adjust to such a secondary position. Other supporting roles which are necessary in high school basketball include table officials, such as score keepers and statisticians. The senior coach had two statisticians, a senior one and a junior one, so that when the senior one graduated, the junior one could help train somebody else. In many ways the statisticians were recruited as were his players, however, the coach maintained that the opportunity existed for the cut players, if they took advantage of it.

Despite this opportunity for players that were cut to maintain their involvement with the team, it existed within a closed awareness context: the players were not told that these options were open to them until after they had been cut.

Players

Introduction

As the senior and junior try-outs for School B were run as one, the only players who were involuntarily disengaged from the basketball 'scene' were those who failed to make the junior team. Only Grade 10 and 11 girls were cut from the senior team (all the Grade 12's that tried out made it) which means that these girls all had another chance to make a school team. Although these girls were not offered another

status (i.e., manager, statistician), they were given another chance to attain a lesser status in the same organization. This chance to attain another status, also presented the possibility of repeating an undesirable passage to non-players.

Preliminary Stage

Although all interested players were meant to go to the senior try-out, only one of the six players finally cut from the junior team had gone to the senior try-out. The others knew from announcements over the P.A. and from notices put up by the Physical Education staff, that the juniors would not be starting until the day after the seniors so they just went to the junior try-outs. Prior to the season only two of the players had done any type of preparation for the try-outs which consisted of running, lifting weights and scrimmaging with some friends. One of these players attributed the low amount of preparation to a lack of seriousness about basketball:

> nobody that I know on the junior team is serious enough to go to basketball camp--as alot of people who are on the senior team do--I'd say about half of the team went to basketball camps last summer (7:86).

The centrality of a passage to an individual may be increased not only by how seriously they take the desired status but also by how much time was invested in achieving the desired passage. If time invested in preparation for the desired passage was as little as it was for most of the

girls who were cut from the junior team, the implication is that the attainment of the status in basketball was not a central part of their lives.

Stage one and Two

Only one of the junior players who was eventually cut, had actually attended the whole of the senior's try-out. One of the other players, who was injured and unable to play at the time, went just to fill in the form. As was mentioned in the previous section, on this form the players had to give details of their basketball experience, reasons for trying out and other relevant pieces of information. At no point, was similar information gained from those players who only attended the junior try-outs, and in this sense it was the coach who was in the closed awareness context, not knowing all the players details.

The junior coach reiterated what the senior coach had said the day before at the senior try-outs, that the junior team was a building one for the senior's, and that if a Grade 10 was good as a Grade 11--the Grade 10 would be selected because she would have 3 years to give to the school. She also told the players that she was not looking for skill, so much as attitude and not how much ability they had, but how much potential they had. The players were told that after the try-outs, a list would be posted.

One of the players said she felt the junior coach was a carbon copy of the senior one: the try-out was run in exactly the same way. The coach told them she hoped to make

the cuts after the second night, but it was announced on the P.A. that there would be one more try-out and that the list would be posted the following day. As with the senior coach, the junior coach kept the players in an open awareness context with regard to the timing of events: how the passage was scheduled, and also how they would be informed of who had or had not made the team. The players were still unsure, however, as to how many players were to be retained. As has been mentioned before, most of the players seemed to be reluctant to question the coaches, so although they expressed their concern to the researcher that they did not know how many were to be retained, the coach was never asked.

Stage Three

Having practised for four nights, the coach finally posted a list of those players who were to return to practice. Three out of the seven players initially cut described their immediate reaction as one of anger and surprise.[90] The others, although disappointed at not making it, felt that the players who made it were better anyway; one of the girls actually expressed relief at not having to spend so much time on basketball. Before one of these girls looked at the list on the board, the coach saw her and asked her whether she would like to be the team manager. The coach told her that although her skills weren't quite good enough,

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[90] One other player was cut, but made the team after the second try-out.

she liked her enthusiasm and wanted her to stay with the team. Although this girl felt that she would have been extremely lucky if she had made the team, she was still disappointed. She was glad however to still be in a position to learn more about the game, and that had been her reason for trying-out.

Two of the players who were cut went to see the coach immediately to find out why they had been cut. The coach told them, that they had been cut because of their 'bad' attitude, as had most of the others. After arguing with the coach for some time, these two girls were eventually offered another chance to try-out, and they were asked to go to the next practice. Following the practice, one of the girls made it, but the other was cut again. This girl went back to talk to the coach and this time she was told that there were too many people in her position and that was why the coach could not keep her.

One of the other girls who had been cut originally also talked to the coach and was told that because her attitude was bad in Physical Education class the coach/physical education teacher thought it would be bad in basketball. This girl tried to convince the coach/physical education teacher that her attitude changed after three p.m., because she liked playing basketball. The coach, however, felt that the bad attitude was due to a personality clash between her and the student, so whether it was before or after three p.m., the differences would still be there. In effect the

girl was trying to convey the centrality of basketball in her life to the coach, but the coach did not see that as solving the personality clash, so the girl remained cut.

The reports from the players who attributed their failure to the external factor of the coach not liking their attitude in Physical Education, were replete with condemnations of selecting a team on attitude rather than on skill alone. Some of the players claimed that they did not know that would be the case, but others had stated that the coach had told them it was attitude and not necessarily skill that would get them onto the team. A state of closed awareness seemed to surround some of the players (those who were most bitter at being cut), concerning the criteria for selection. Despite the fact that some of these players missed the senior coach's talk, the junior coach was reported to have repeated many of the points in her talk at the beginning of the junior try-outs.

Despite the vociferous complaints from some of the players about the decisions made by the coach, the *way* in which they were informed raised few complaints. There were some suggestions for modifications. For instance, when one girl had been cut from a volleyball team, the coach told each person why they had not made it and she thought this was much better than looking at a list. One girl suggested that those players who did not make it should be told and then a list should be put up listing those who had made it. Two of the players felt posting a list was all right and

that no changes needed to be made

Summary

In summary the selection process used at School B exhibited characteristics of 'degradation ceremonies' insofar as the junior coach tried to keep the method of informing players of the outcome as impersonal as possible. Yet it also exhibited characteristics of the 'cooling-out' process, for example, when one of the cut players was invited to become the team manager.

The timetable of the status passage was short (especially for the seniors), although the senior coach felt that it had to be like that, so that there would be time to work with the team before the CAHPER tournament. The structuring of the status passage was very rigid (especially for the senior team), in contrast to School A, where a player who did not appear until the fourth practice actually made the team. In School B, all potential senior players had to be there on the first and only night, or they were not on the team. The junior team schedule, however, was slightly more flexible than that of the seniors, so much so, that two players were able to try-out for a second time.

The following chapter brings together many of the points raised in the discussion and the preceding chapters, in an effort to summarize the main findings of the study. Following the conclusions, some recommendations for future try-outs are made as well as suggestions for future research in the area. Firstly, suggestions as to ways in which the

selection process in high school sport can be made less problematic for coaches and players shall be made based upon the ideas of the coaches and players interviewed in the study. Secondly, recommendations are made as to the type of research which should be done in the light of the findings of this study.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Having chosen the selection process in girl's high school basketball, as the main area of concern, this study focused upon how athletes were involuntarily disengaged from their sport's environment. The following research questions were posed: 1. How was the selection process structured by the coaches?; 2. What type(s) of involuntary disengagement procedure was used?; 3. How did those athletes who were not selected for the team interpret the selection process?; and finally 4. How did the disengaged athletes manage the status change? The aim of the study was to take the first few steps towards a substantive theory of involuntary disengagement from high school sport.

In an effort to take the investigation and subsequent discussion of the selection process beyond a purely descriptive level various theoretical concepts were employed. Chapter V presented a discussion of the processes of involuntary disengagement, in relation to these concepts. This section brings together, in a more concentrated form points raised in chapter V, which are elements of a substantive theory of involuntary disengagement from sport discovered from this study.

The selection process was considered to be an example of a status passage: from non-team member to team member. An

athlete who is cut from a team experiences the reversal of their passage. As discussed in Chapter III, Glaser and Strauss have identified a number of characteristics and properties which status passages may or may not possess. Chapter V considered those characteristics which were of central importance to this investigation. This section attempts to summarize Chapter V and present a more general picture of the characteristics of involuntary disengagement from high school sport.

The passage of non-team member to team member was highly *controlled* by the coaches. All the coaches had a try-out schedule to follow which was only altered if the coaches were reluctant to make a quick decision. For instance, both the senior coaches at School A and the junior coach at School B lengthened their try-outs because they were unsure who to cut from their teams. This flexibility, however, was only available to the controlling agents, the passagees had to abide by the rules if they wanted to be selected. Of importance to this study was the way in which coaches exercised their control to reverse the passage of potential team members to team members by cutting players.

Concomitant with the ability to control a passage was the amount of control which the coaches could exert over the state of awareness context of the passagees. The passagees were limited in their knowledge of the try-out environment, by what the coach decided to tell them. Glaser and Strauss suggested that an individual was either in a closed or open

awareness context. In the study, however, some individuals were aware of certain things but not aware of others. This suggests that there are two levels of open awareness which would account for this seemingly semi-open (semi-closed) awareness context. For example, all of the coaches informed their players of details about the try-out such as: times, places, number of days, when and where the list would be put up, thereby creating an open-awareness context (the first level of open awareness). What some of the coaches did not do was tell the players on what criteria they would be selected, thereby creating a closed awareness context (the second level of open awareness which was not experienced by some).

A closed awareness context at the second level, however, was not always due to the controlling agent failing to give information, it was also be caused by the passagee not listening, or not even being there when the controlling agent was giving the relevant information. On several occasions, players stated that the coach did not inform them of certain things (i.e. the criteria for selection) when in actual fact, after checking through the interviews with these players, it was discovered that they were not at the practice at which the coach had given the information. Unlike the closed-awareness contexts which often surround seriously ill or dying patients (where information about their condition is withheld from them on purpose to 'protect' them), there was no reason to suggest that the

coaches withheld any information from the players on purpose.

Closed awareness contexts in the selection process were discovered to be problematic because they often resulted in a lack of understanding between the coach and the players. The most common example of this concerned the criteria for selection: some girls assumed that they would be selected primarily upon their ability, and when they were cut because of their attitude, they experienced feelings of anger and frustration and found it hard to accept their new status. Other players who had managed to maintain an open awareness context found the adjustment to the new or forced status easier.

Although the status passage from potential team-member to team-member was collective, in the sense that they were all passing through the same passage, those for whom the passage was reversed (i.e. those who were cut) acted as individuals rather than as members of a collective. Also, all the players entered the status passage voluntarily, but those who experienced a reversal were disengaged involuntarily. Some players expressed relief at their passage being reversed, but it was felt that this was more a function of cognitive dissonance after the fact, than an existing desire to have the passage reversed. It would seem illogical for someone to enter a passage, wishing it to be reversed. The researcher made the assumption that all those who tried out (or entered the passage) did so because they

wanted to make the team, and also that those who had that passage reversed experienced it as being involuntary and undesirable.

The extent to which players experienced the passage reversal as undesirable seemed to be related to the centrality of the passage or the desired status in their lives. The players who seemed to find the status and identity adjustment the hardest were two of the veterans cut from the senior team at School A. Both girls had had several years experience in basketball and had invested a lot of time and effort in the game. Taking the time and effort put into the game, as well as the expressed enjoyment of the game as indicators of the degree of centrality, it was concluded that the attainment of the desired status (becoming a team member) was of high centrality to the lives of these girls. One other consideration in coming to this conclusion was the way in which both girls reacted when they discovered they had not made the team: both were in tears, went home and missed school for the rest of the day. Making the team for some of the juniors was interpreted as being of low centrality due to the lack of preparation and effort put into trying out. Some of the juniors did not even express much interest in the outcome of the try-outs and did not rush to see the list of who had made the team: one player forgot to go until the afternoon.

The status passage lacked any distinct signs which players could use to judge their progress. In general,

players who were cut did not anticipate it because of any differential treatment they had experienced by the coach. There was one exception, when a player reported that she was not switched in during a practice, she interpreted this as a sure sign that the coach intended to cut her. The passage itself had clearly defined stages through which the passagees progressed, but few signs existed within each stage to indicate whether they would be successful or not. The lack of signs during the passage meant that unless a player had, for example, compared her personal skill level with those of others, and decided that they were better than her own, (and that she would probably be cut), she would be totally unprepared for being cut. Those who anticipated being cut (having realised that their skill level was not high enough) seemed to be less upset and unsettled by being cut, than those who had made the incorrect assumption that they would make the team.

Although the actual try-out process may be negotiable (i.e. a player trying to be excused attending one of the try-outs), the outcome or verdict is usually non-negotiable. There was one instance in the study where two players managed to be given another try-out by talking to the coach. It was interesting to note that the coach stated that she would never do that again, because she felt that the other players would not respect any decisions made by her in the future. She felt that by allowing the girls to try out a second time she was admitting that her first selection had

been a mistake. In this case the negotiability of the passage led to a repetition for one of the girls of the passage reversal: she was in effect cut twice. The extent of repetition of a passage (or the reversal of it) seems to be dependent upon how negotiable the passage is and also on how flexible the controlling agent is.

One property of status passsages which Glaser and Strauss make little mention of is the degree of contact between the controlling agent and the passagee. Most of the coaches preferred to reduce the contact between themselves and the passagee when informing them of who had made the team (i.e. they posted a list). The coaches presented two reasons for posting a list (as opposed to informing the players personally): firstly, it reduced the embarrassment experienced by the players, who would have to face their inquisitive peers immediately after, in the changing rooms; secondly, it was easier for themselves, they did not have to face distraught or angry players who were unable to listen to reason. Most of the coaches said they liked the more personal approach of talking to each player, but claimed that time did not permit it. Instead, three of the coaches (from the two senior teams) posted a list and informed the players that they were welcome to come and talk with them if they did not know why they had been cut. The other coaches posted a list but they did not openly invite players to talk to them, although, in one case (with the junior team at School B) two of the players spoke to the coach anyway.

'Degradation' or 'Cooling-out'?

The type of contact which is established between the controlling agent and the passagee helps to identify whether the passage is of a 'degrading' nature or of a 'cooling-out' nature. To recapitulate 'degradation ceremonies' involve the public denunciation of an individual which, through the destruction of the individual's identity, usually results in them being forced out of that particular social organization. 'Degradation', as a form of moral indignation, is by its nature, very impersonal. In contrast, 'cooling-out' is a more private process when often in an attempt to console the individual they are offered an alternative status. Usually, this status is lower than the one originally desired or possessed. Instead of destroying an individual's identity, an attempt is made to redefine it in terms which are compatible with the new status. Rather than being forced out of the social organization, 'cooling-out' via the offer of an alternative status gives the individual a chance to remain an 'insider'. By accepting an alternative status the individual is seen as endorsing the procedures and methods of the organization to which they still belong. 'Cooling-out' involves much more personal contact between the controlling agent(in this case the coach) and the passagee, than is found in 'degradation ceremonies'.

The selection processes studied could not be simply classified as 'degrading' or 'cooling-out', rather each

process was identified as possessing elements of each to varying degrees; they are not mutually exclusive. Each process could therefore be placed on a continuum ranging from a 'high degree of cooling-out' (or, 'not very degrading') to a 'low degree of cooling-out' (or, 'highly degrading'). Most of the selection processes studied would, if placed on such a continuum, be located just to the 'low degree of cooling-out' side of the mid-point of the continuum. They would be placed there for the following reasons. In all cases the method used to inform the players of their status was public: a list was posted on the physical education notice board.[91] Some of the coaches, however, as well as using this public method of informing players , also used more private methods (characteristic of 'cooling-out') later, to help the players adjust to their new status.

Another characteristic of 'degradation ceremonies' was the lack of status alternatives offered to the players. Only one player was offered a supportive role as team manager, although the coaches maintained that this option was always open to the players, but they did not take advantage of it. In actual practice, a call usually went out for manager and table oficials at the same time as players were informed of the try-outs, so by the time the try-outs were over, most of

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[91] Had the list of names been read out over the public announcement system, then it would have been even more public, and therefore closer to the 'low degree of cooling-out'.

the positions were taken.

One of the major characteristics of 'degradation ceremonies' is the destruction of the passagee's identity. To use such a term as destruction is rather extreme when discussing the selection process in high school basketball. The degree of centrality of basketball to the girl's lives did not seem so great that when the opportunity to play was removed, their lives were radically altered. Instead, it would seem more appropriate to suggest that their identities were temporarily bruised, so that with time, and perhaps help from the coach and the player's significant others, they would be able to reconstruct their identity and by doing so reconstruct their social reality.

Recommendations

From this study two types of recommendations emerge: those concerning suggestions as to how the selection process may be structured in the future (in high school sport) and those recommendations concerning the path which future research in the area should take.

In making recommendations concerning changes which could be made to the current selection processes, the researcher has acted as an intermediary between the coaches and the players. The role of intermediary has involved investigating how both the coaches and the players interpret the same selection process. Part of this investigation was designed to elicit suggestions as to how the selection process and in particular, involuntary disengagement could

be 'improved' or made more acceptable. The following recommendations, therefore, come from the coaches and the players, with the researcher's role being purely that of a 'gatherer of information'.

Recommendations for Coaches

In general, both the coaches and the players wanted more time for the try-outs. Those coaches who had their teams entered in a tournament which started two weeks after the end of the volleyball season finished were restricted by School Board rules as to when the try-outs began. Often, however, players did not realise that the coach did not have full control over their own environment (even if they did control the player's environment). As a result of this some players thought that the coaches only wanted one day or four days at the most for try-outs, and they were critical of this. This type of structural change is beyond the capabilities of any individual coach or player and lies with the School Board's Athletic Association. As was discovered, however, individual coaches can make small adjustments such as the coach who ran unofficial training sessions in the morning while the volleyball season was still in play.

With regard to the actual selection process, most coaches and players took for granted that players should be cut from a team. This is in contrast to other schools which have decided that anybody who wants to play on a school team should be given the opportunity to do so. Schools which have

adopted this attitude have still selected a first team, but other teams were created to ensure that those who wanted to play basketball had an opportunity to do so.[92]

Although none of the coaches or players had questioned whether athletes should be cut from high school teams they did question the techniques which were used. In general the coaches thought a personal approach was useful, especially for those players who had made basketball a central part of their lives. On the other hand experience had taught the coaches that often players would be too stunned and shocked at being cut, that talking to them immediately was of little use. As a result of experiences this year, several coaches suggested an 'ideal' way to cut players. This method involved telling the players that a list would be posted and that the coaches would like to talk to those people whose names did not appear on the list, in a week's time. The coaches felt that the wait of a week would help 'cool' the players down and then the meeting with the coach might be more profitable.

Most of the players were quite happy with having to look at a list to see whether they had made the team or not,[93] but they also wanted the opportunity to talk to the coach. During the try-outs the players also wanted to be

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[92] It was one of these schools that the researcher first approached to be involved in the study, but as nobody by definition was cut from the team it was decided to look elsewhere for a sample.

[93] Most had not experienced any other method of being informed.

kept in an open awareness context, concerning the length of try-outs and the criteria for selection. Two of the players who did not go and talk to their coach afterwards, said that they would like to have known why they were cut, but they had never got around to asking the coach. It seems that a possible solution would be for the coach to arrange a time to talk with each player about the cuts. All of the coaches expressed a willingness to help interested players find a position on a city league team, so that they could at least continue playing. Only two of the thirteen players cut, expressed an interest in playing in the Ladies City League, but several of the others wanted to play community league basketball. Unfortunately, many of the girls cut were too old for that community league team and therefore they had no other opportunity to play basketball, other than on a school team. Despite the coaches concern, therefore, the players they cut were effectively left with nowhere to play. The players who were cut from high school teams were caught by two things, firstly, having been cut from a team the player lost an opportunity to learn and practise, and without learning and practising it is highly unlikely that the players would be able to make the team the following year; secondly, coaches were reluctant to let extra players practise and train with the team because the whole learning process had to be slowed down for the poorer players. As a result of the slowing down of learning, the actual girls selected for the team may not have been able to improve as

fast as they might have otherwise done.

If players cut from a high school team were unable to play and learn elsewhere it was unfortunate that the school sytem was unable to offer any alternatives. One solution may be to wait until the teams have been selected before asking for team managers and table officials. This would allow those who had been cut an opportunity to keep in touch with basketball and still be able to learn something even though they might no longer be part of the team. This type of 'cooling-out' procedure would put the onus on the player. So to maintain their involvement instead of forcing them out of the team environment they could opt to stay involved.

Recommendations for Research

Due to the limited nature of the study (only four girl's high school teams were studied), only the first few steps towards a substantive theory of involuntary disengagement from amateur sport can be taken. To develop this theory further, studies must be carried out investigating the process of involuntary disengagement from other sports and at other levels of competition. Future research could therefore look at collegiate teams, provincial teams and eventually national teams, for as it has been suggested here, the degree of centrality of the sport to the individual's life will affect just how undesirable and how involuntary the status passage reversal is.

Other forms of involuntary disengagement, in sport, could also be examined in relation to the work done on status passages and also 'cooling-out' and 'degradation'. Such research could be concerned with forced retirement (i.e. due to injury) or a more temporary type of disengagement, for instance being substituted (or as many coaches and athletes would call it 'bench sitting' or 'bench warming').

The type of research conducted could vary from a 'radical' critique of involuntary disengagement (i.e. why cut people in the first place?) to a more 'liberal' approach (as adopted in this study) which recognises that involuntary disengagement exists and seeks ways to make the process less problematic for all involved. Another approach, could take the position of the coach and seek to find more effective and successful ways to conduct the process of involuntary disengagement.

The way in which this type of research is conducted necessarily affects the quality of the data obtained and hence it also affects the usefulness of the data. The author would contend that highly quantitative techniques would be of limited use in gathering information on the processes of involuntary disengagement. Rather a qualitative approach, similar to the one adopted in this study is advocated.

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ADDENDUM

The Research Process

When working on any piece of research only a fraction of what is thought, experienced and learned is recorded in the final report. Too often, the trials and tribulations of the research process are regarded as being irrelevant in the final discussion of results. Yet, for the student researcher,[94] it is often these accounts of the research process which can be of the most value. William Foote Whyte suggested that if statements on the methods of research were included in a published report, they most often placed the discussion on a logical-intellectual basis. By doing so, he suggested that these researchers failed to acknowledge that the researcher is a social animal, just as the subjects of the research are (1955:279). C. Wright Mills (1961) was of a similar mind when he wrote the Appendix "On Intellectual Craftsmanship", to his book *"The Sociological Imagination"*. Mills felt that it was better to have one account of how a working student goes about their work, than a dozen 'codifications of procedure' by people who have had limited field experience (1961:195). Mills devoted the Appendix to reporting how he went about his craft, and in doing so, he produced an exemplary piece of work. The following prefatory comment which Mills uses, is one which applies equally well

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[94] 'student' researcher refers not only to unexperienced researchers, but also to the more experienced researcher who may be using a new or different technique.

to this section:

> This is necessarily a personal statement but it is written with the hope that others, especially those beginning independent work, will make it less personal by the facts of their own experience (1961:195).

In trying to make this section useful to others I have tried to avoid accounts of 'my nausea amongst the natives', but as with any type of qualitative research one's whole life is affected by the research and in turn the research is affected by one's self.

Qualitative Research

To the 'outsider' there is something about qualitative research which seems so simple: "Anybody can observe, anybody can ask questions, can't they?" The implication of these kinds of questions is that the more complex the methodological approach to a study is (i.e., one which uses sophisticated statistical techniques), the more scientifically credible it will be. I was reminded of this misconception recently while discussing my study with a colleague. I mentioned that mine was a qualitative study, there was a pause and then my colleague said, in an incredulous tone of voice, "You mean, you have no statistics!"

In some ways as qualitative researchers, we are our own worst enemies, because the research report reveals little of what actually happens during the research process, thereby implying that little in fact does go on. For example, one

line from a brief description of the methodology used may read as follows: "Content analysis was used to analyze the data." It seems so simple, anybody could understand it, and yet it is of little help to someone trying to do similar research. If, however, the methodology included the following: "The technique of multiple regression analysis was utilized to generate path coefficients (Beta weights) for an additive and multiplicative causal model" (McPherson, 1976:176), the reader would not only appreciate the complexity of path analysis, but would also have some guide to follow, if a similar methodology was used. The aim of this Addendum is not to make qualitative research sound more complicated than it is, but rather it is to present an account of one researcher's experiences with qualitataive research.

Introduction

> ". . .you must learn to use your life experiences in your intellectual work: continually to examine and interpret it." (Mills, 1961:196)

At the start of my graduate work I had been advised to keep a notebook, and record in it ideas for research topics. As I read through my "black book" of research ideas there seemed to be a recurrent theme concerning competitive sport. My over-riding concern seemed to be with failure to achieve a desired sports goal. I finally embarked upon this topic when one specific life experience seemed to highlight many of the things which I felt were problematic in competitive, amateur

sport. In this sense my intellectual work and life experiences greatly influenced one another, as Mills advocates.

When describing the qualitative research process, Wiseman uses the analogy of a murder mystery (1974). In this mystery the detective (the researcher) starts with a few clues and questions persons connected to the case. As the questioning proceeds the detective develops hunches and uses more questions to follow-up these hunches. Soon a picture of what happened emerges and more information is gathered until the case is solved, and what was unknown is known. The purpose of this analogy is to illustrate the constant interplay that exists in qualitative research, between data gathering and analysis. The analogy which Wiseman uses is also effective because it illustrates the uncertainty which is inherent in the qualitative - grounded theory research process. When a grounded theory approach is used the researcher does not have the security afforded by a priori hypotheses. The security to which I refer is really a mental state; the research process can be planned down to the finest detail prior to embarking upon the research (thereby reducing the possibility of anything going wrong), which gives the researcher some peace of mind. This security is lacking in much qualitative research. In this study the uncertainty of not knowing whether subjects would remember to meet with me and of not knowing how responsive they would be, all contributed to an uneasy state of mind.

Before Going Into The Field

As Wiseman (1974:318) points out, because there is such a close link between data gathering and analysis, there is little organization that can be done prior to 'getting one's feet wet". Unlike quantitative research it is impossible to establish a detailed research design prior to entering the field, instead the methods of research and analysis in qualitative research remain flexible. There are some things that must be done, however, prior to any type of research: approval must be gained from those "gatekeepers"[95] who control the access to the research site and subjects. The type of research undertaken in this study necessitated getting the coaches, physical education staff and school principal to agree to the study and the School Boards to give their consent to carry out the study. Another "gatekeeper" whose acceptance we often take for granted, is the subject (in this case the athlete). Without their cooperation there can be no study.

Although no rigid modus operandi can be established prior to the actual research, a rough sketch of the methodologies to be used can be drafted. As qualitative research begins without formalized a priori hypotheses, the outcome is quite open, and it is the flexibility of the methodologies which permits this. In this study, a combination of techniques were used (as outlined in Chapter

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[95] Barnes (1979), discusses the types of control which gatekeepers are able to exert.

IV), but unstructured interviews were the main source of information.

In The Field

Stage One

As well as recording my field notes from my observations and from informal conversations with the physical education staff, I kept a research log in which I tried to record everything that I did concerned with the research. I also recorded my thoughts and feelings about the research.

To make the interviews flow freely I decided to tape-record each session, but only if the interviewee agreed to the use of the tape-recorder. To try and make the tape-recorder appear less threatening than it actually was I used one which not only had an internal microphone, but was also relatively small. In both schools (where most of the players were interviewed) the physical education staff had given me the use of a classroom. Although not totally conducive to creating a relaxed conversation (interview), the classroom environment was all that was available (if I wanted to interview the girls during their free times after school). One of the girls invited me to interview her at her home, which I said I would do, if we could be assured of getting somewhere quiet to talk where we would be uninterrupted. Three of the coaches were interviewed during free time at their places of work, two agreed to come to the

university and the last one was interviewed in her home. No matter how many plans are made to ensure that the interview environment which the researcher sets up is conducive to relaxed conversation, the interviewees must be prepared for interruptions. Due to the indeterminacy of working in the field, the researcher must remain flexible, and even be prepared to reschedule an interview if necessary.

In preparation for the interview a list of topics to be covered was drawn-up and this list was referred to occasionally throughout the interview, to check that nothing had been forgotten. After interviewing it is a good idea to check the tapes to ensure that the quality of the recording is good enough. If it is not good enough, then the subject can easily be recontacted and interviewed without much time elapsing. The equipment should also be tested prior to each session. If the tapes are to be transcribed, they should be done as soon after the interview as is possible. From reading the transcripts the researcher may get new ideas as to what to ask the interviewee. After several interviews have been conducted the researcher would reassess the original list of topics to gain as much relevant information about the topic under study as possible.

In this study participant observation was used as an additional tool, which when possible [96]

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[96] It was not possible in School B because the school was only contacted after the try-outs. This situation arose because the researcher had, due to information supplied by the coaches at School A, expected fifty to sixty girls to try-out for both teams, which would have resulted in a

[96] it served to provide background information on the school, as well as useful information which could be used during the interviews. From watching as many of the try-outs as possible I was able to use these observations to remind interviewees of actual sequences of events during the try-outs. This was utilizing a very simple form of stimulated recall, whereby the interviewee was prompted, by helping them to remember precise situations.

Every opportunity was taken whilst I was in the field [97] to talk to other people who, although not intimately involved with the selection process, were able to make my picture of the research setting more complete.

Stage Two

As the research progresses, a wealth of data begins to mount up, as information is collected from a variety of sources. If too much data are allowed to accumulate without any preliminary analysis, the researcher faces an insurmountable task once all the data have been collected. Wiseman (1974:319) suggests that there are two questions which researchers should ask as they collect their data: firstly. 'What sociological concepts does a piece of action or some depth interview material suggest?; and secondly, 'In

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[96](cont'd)sample of approximately thirty girls. Quite unexpectedly, the final sample only amounted to seven players and so another school was quickly contacted and another six subjects were contacted.

[97] This refers not only to when I was actually in contact with the subjects, but also to that time in my life.

what parallel areas of social life are these concepts in operation?' In these early stages of analysis, it is essential to begin to make notes of ideas or questions which begin to emerge from the data. To avoid ending up with a pile of notes scribbled on odd bits of paper, they could be grouped under headings of either sociological concepts or perhaps in the temporal order of events.

After Being in the Field

Once all the research in the field has been completed, the task ahead of analyzing the data may seem daunting. In this study the method used to analyze the data was that of grounded theory (outlined in Chapter IV). Of greatest help in this study was an informative article by Turner (1981) and this section details how I analyzed my data using techniques similar to those suggested by Turner. Several adaptations were made to Turner's methods, in order to make the handling of my data easier. The following section describes the eight stages of data analysis suggested by Turner.

Having transcribed all the interview tapes [98] the transcriptions were then divided into two groups, those of the players and those of the coaches. Each transcription was given an identification number and each response by the interviewee was also numbered (for example, 1 to 89

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[98] The transcriptions should be typewritten as it makes the analysis easier.

depending on the length of the interview). The first stage of analysis involved asking, 'What categories or concepts best describe the content of each response?' Several categories may be established before a 'goodness of fit' is established between the phenomena studied and the category assigned to it (Turner, 1981:232).

Each category label was placed at the top of a five by eight inch index card. In the top left hand corner of the card the category number was placed; often more than one category card is needed and I numbered the cards as follows, 5, 5.1, 5.2. etc.. Below the category label each relevant entry was placed on a new line. Each new line began with the number of the interview and the response number (i.e. the fifth response in the first interview would be represented by 1:5) followed by a brief description of the phenomena. At the end of each line (by the right-hand side of the card) cross-reference numbers were placed, if the phenomena described related to another category. The cross-reference number used was the number of the related category card. The categories which were created followed the temporal flow of the try-out. For instance the first few categories were of a demographic nature, dealing with age, grade and school attended. Later categories concerned socialization into basketball and the influence of the individual's peers upon participation. Where one category had a link with a previous one, a cross-reference was noted on the category card.

Once each interview had been analyzed in this manner, the second stage involved saturating the categories. This resulted in further examples of the categories being accumulated. The main reason for this stage is to ensure that none of the useful interview data is 'lost' during the categorization stage. Once the categories had been saturated the category cards for each category were gathered and a definition of the category label was derived. These definitions should be such that they provide a comprehensive description of what should be included under that particular category. Stages four to seven (outlined in Chapter IV) involve the constant analysis of the categories and the phenomena described within them. The researcher should search for links between one category and another, and follow them up. At this stage, many ideas come to mind and it is again useful to make note of these. The eighth stage involved making connections from the data to existing theory. This stage is the culmination of the previous stages and usually takes the form of the discussion in a research report. At this stage, Turner (1981) suggests that the emerging theory is likely to have a 'messy degree of complexity', but there should still be a 'closeness of fit' between what is presented and what the subjects who lived the phenomena experienced. The 'messy degree of complexity' to which Turner refers is typical of a qualitative - grounded theory approach. Initially trying to make connections from the data to existing theory in this study

was hard because although I was familiar with the existing theory, the data seemed to have no order to it. It was not until I had scrutinized the data (by categorizing them) that patterns began to emerge, which made it easier to make connections with existing theory.

Doing the Writing

Is the data valid?

The nature of qualitative research does not permit us to run a series of statistical procedures to find out whether the data are valid and reliable. Validity and reliability are interpreted differently in qualitative studies. The following are the rules which one researcher (Wiseman, 1974:326) works by (and which I tried to emulate in this study):

1. Assume, at least at first, that no one is lying.
2. If you must choose between an official's story and that of an individual (that is, institution vs. individual) most likely the institution is not being totally honest.
3. There is nothing that happens or that people tell you about that 'doesn't make sense'. It is part of their lives. They think it makes sense. It is up to you to make sociological sense of it.
4. Assume that human beings may not be very smart in the decisions they make, but they do the very best they can.
5. There is usually nothing that people tell you that you will see (if it is within the research topic) that is

truly irrelevant to your study.

6. There is no such thing as the absolute truth. All the most objective researcher can report if his [or her] version of the actions and decisions of others and how they see their world.

Alfred Schutz established several postulates for scientific inquiry, one of which is the postulate of adequacy. By this he meant that the people who were studied should be able to recognize their world if they read the final report (Phillipson in Filmer et al, 1972:119-164).

Is the data significant?

At the end of the research process, a devil's advocate may say, "So what, of what use are your findings?". The significance may lie in various things. Firstly, you the researcher may have gained a lot from doing the study, both personally and academically, and if it arose out of life experiences, it may affect your activities in the future. Secondly, the subjects, through being involved in the study may have increased their awareness of what they do during the selection process. Thirdly, if communicated the results may have some influence upon coaches and players in other sports. Finally, the development of theory may enhance the study of other areas of social life.

The significance of the findings can, to some degree, be measured. For example, the impact that the findings have upon the subjects and other interested persons in other

sports can be determined (if the information has been communicated: i.e. via publications) through dialogue. It is only through communication with others involved either practically or theoretically, that any area of study can develop. For the researcher, a study is very rarely completed, because the process of development and refinement of both methods and theory continue through the researcher's life.